

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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Vol. VI.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
David Adams,
PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 22, 1876.

TERMS IN ADVANCE: One copy, four months, \$1.00
One copy, one year, 3.00
Two copies, one year, 5.00

No. 306.

JACK RABBIT, THE PRAIRIE SPORT; OR, THE WOLF CHILDREN OF THE LLANO ESTACADO.

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PROLOGUE.

WHAT THE NIGHT-BIRD SAW.

"To-whit, to-whoo—hoo—hoo—oo."
A dark, shadowy figure was silently, cautiously making its way through the luxuriant undergrowth, when the first notes of the ill-omened bird broke upon his ear, and his keen eye immediately rested upon the ruffled mass of feathers as, with head depressed and tail elevated, it croaked forth the lugubrious notes.

One tinged with superstition would have read an evil omen in this incident; but not so this man. Instead, a low, mellow laugh answered the bird as he passed on.

The owl left its perch and flew on heavy yet noiseless wing before the midnight prowler, repeating its warning note.

The dark outlines of a building uprose before the man. Pausing, he uttered a low, peculiar whistle. As though in reply, the night-bird flapped its wings and crooned forth its lengthened note from the overhanging bough.

The man started and shrunk back, but then, with a low, glad cry, he sprang forward as a light, graceful figure appeared in the belt of bright moonlight surrounding the old tree.

"My jewel!" he murmured, as his strong arms wound around the yielding form and pressed it passionately to his breast. "At last—at last!"

With ruffled feathers, with head cocked knowingly, the night-bird looked down upon the lovers with its round, staring eyes. The downy plumage is suddenly ruffled, the broad tail slowly spreads as it arises, the ball-like head goes down; but the lugubrious cry is checked. The bird straightens up, its feathers lie close, it more nearly resembles a hawk ready for speedy flight.

What has alarmed it? Yonder dark, stealthy, creeping shadows! And yet—shadows seldom carry bright weapons for the moon's beams to glint from, nor do bushes rustle, twigs crackle, the ground echo beneath the tread of shadowy, bodiless phantoms.

With a warning cry the night-bird leaves its perch and sails heavily above the lovers. The maiden shrinks back, with a little cry; the lover draws her to him, and once more their lips meet.

The bushes part. The weapon-bearing shadows dart forth. With a shriek, the white-robed maiden flees, even as her lover is stricken to the earth. The owl hoots; the silvery queen of night veils her face beneath a sable cloud.

The spot that had seemed sacred to love's whispers, now resounds with fierce oaths and curses; with the clashing of steel, the sharp detonation of firearms; the heavy, sickening thud-thud of vengeful blows alighting upon human flesh. And again comes that lugubrious cry.

Frightened, the night-bird sails heavily away. Over the shrubbery so thick and tangled; over the high, massive adobe wall that surrounds the garden, finally settling upon a bushy tree near the edge of the chaparral. Had instinct guided it?

Trampling heavily, four men came slowly through the night, dragging between them what seemed a dead or dying man. They paused close beside the tree—beneath the ruins of what had once been the pride of that stunted forest, now a gaunt, leafless, lightning-scarred skeleton.

The night-bird bent its eyes knowingly upon the scene.

The lover lay, bound and helpless, at the feet of his enemies. One of them spoke—cold, contemptuous, yet biting words. Words that told of man's duplicity and woman's treachery. Then he bowed over the prisoner. As he arose, the moon shone forth with increased splendor.

Blood was flowing from the captive's head. The tall, dark man was pinning something to the lightning-scarred tree-trunk.

They were human ears!

As though frightened by the scent of human blood, the night-bird flapped its wings and sailed away, its ominous cry growing fainter and less distinct.

The moon sailed on. The insects chirped and trilled. The owl occasionally sounded its note while sailing over the chaparral, gradually nearing the dead tree. Noiselessly parting the air, the ominous bird rolled its staring eyes round the spot. The ground was free—the intruders had gone.



"Back-dare to touch my sister and I'll shoot you like a coyote!" he said, in a low, stern voice.

CHAPTER I.

WILD SCENES IN THE DESERT.

"It's bad manners ye show, old man Tony, interrupting a gentleman when he's dining—and that after a good forty-mile ride, too."

The voice was a rich, clear one, though slightly drawing, and the speaker raised his head with a reproachful glance of his big, black eyes, then resumed a manful struggle with the chunk of tough jerked meat, though still watching his comrade, who made a series of quick gestures.

"So—a dust-cloud; coming this way; lance points—that means red-skins, then, for devil a Greaser ever had pluck enough to carry lance so far from their holes!" and the man Tony, you look to the horses—ugh! his forage 's tough as buffalo-horn! But I've tackled it, and won't give in beat though all the red-skins 'twixt this and t'other place—you understand, old man Tony?"

The worthy thus addressed made no reply, but strode a few paces further on, where two horses were daintily nibbling the rich, short grass growing around the little pond, fed by the spring beside which the speaker half reclined. Drawing the slackened girths a few inches higher and slipping the dangling bits between the ready jaws were all the preparations required. Then the man strode back to his former look-out, at the edge of the desert island.

For miles upon every side, the hard, arid desert extended, level nearly as a barn-floor. Here and there might be seen a low ridge of sand or an occasional clump of the many-thorned acaci. But these features were unheeded by the tall man.

Far distant, almost upon the horizon line, was the telltale dust-cloud, now larger, more clearly defined; yet only an unusually keen eye could have distinguished it from the dancing, dazzling refraction of the sun's rays upon the blazing sands, much less have declared that the cloud was made by horsemen, who bore lances.

The watcher knew that the party were heading direct for the desert island; the only water-hole for dozens of miles around. His shaggy brows lowered, a look, dark and forbidding, came over his bronzed features; a look, not of fear, but of hatred the most intense.

"'Tis no sweetheart you're watching, that's plain, old man Tony," laughed his comrade, as he came up. "Wonder would those sweet-scented ducks be in quite so much of a hurry

if they knew who was waiting for them? You think they're your old friends, Tony?"

The old man's eyes glared like living coals as he turned, first pointing to his mouth, then shaking his short, heavy rifle with an air that could not be mistaken.

"Whew!" whistled the young man, rubbing his curly poll dubiously. "That's your lay-out, is it? You carry the thing high enough, that's sure! If one, there's fifty bucks in that crowd. I like you as well as the next man, but just now I'd rather be true to my name—Jack Rabbit—in other words, run—puckachee."

Tony did not speak, but made a few rapid gestures, which the young man—who had claimed the whimsical name of Jack Rabbit—apparently had no difficulty in comprehending.

"All right, old man Tony, since you put it that way, I'm always lazy after dinner, but since you're determined to get your head broke, I'll see you through."

Squatting side by side, just within cover of the stunted trees, the two men coolly awaited the approach of the enemy, though the long odds might well have caused them uneasiness.

A strangely-matched couple were they, resembling each other in only one respect—dauntless courage; many would call it utter recklessness. Yet strong and peculiar ties bound them together.

Anthony Chew was a fair specimen of what the Western "hog-meat and hominy" can produce. Rising six feet, his sturdy frame was a well-shaped mass of bone and muscle, strengthened and hardened by long years of wild life—not wild in the one sense of dissipation. Whisky had never dimmed his eye, clouded his brain, nor weakened his muscles, though for nearly half a century he had lived upon or beyond the borders of civilization.

At sixty years of age he was just in his prime. His features were good, what could be seen of them through the long, flowing beard, and hair of almost snowy whiteness. But for many a long year a smile had never been seen upon his face, and a dark, stern look, almost forbidding, had become habitual to him.

Jack Rabbit was but little above the average height, though his rounded limbs, his deep chest, thin flanks, and small waist gave token of unusual strength, combined with an activity not incompatible with his name, or *sobriquet*, whichever it might be.

His face was handsome as his figure was comely. Large eyes, lustrous and sparkling as those of a deer; a healthy brown and red complexion; a silky mustache shading his red, arched lips; a shock of curly black hair

showing beneath his broad-brimmed, gold-banded sombrero. A light jacket of blue broadcloth, ornamented with gold lace and silver buttons; a silken shirt, richly embroidered and frilled; softly-tanned buck-skin nether garments, meeting hairy leggings above beaded moccasins. The *beau ideal* of a prairie dandy.

His arms in every respect resembled those of the old man. A heavy, single-barreled rifle, muzzle-loading, of course; the nature of this rifle would have required a pack-mule for the transportation of metal cartridges. Each man carried two heavy Colt's revolvers, navy pattern; and in their breasts might have been found extra cylinders, all ready for substitution in case of need.

"They're coming up lively, old man Tony," said Jack Rabbit, after a few minutes of silent watching. "They're not on our trail, so they must have left water in the night. Their animals won't be checked easily when they fairly scent the drink, however bad the copper-skies weaken. We'll have to work lively, or good-by to the trail you've been so anxious about."

Nearer and nearer came the party of savages, until at length the comrades could easily distinguish the riders and their mounts. The mustangs, covered with sweat and dust, bore plain traces of long and hard riding, straggling along in twos and threes, according to their speed or endurance, scenting the life-giving water with distended nostrils. Jack Rabbit had spoken truly. Death alone could check a charge like this.

Nearer and nearer—until Tony uttered a low, hissing sound, and the two rifles were lowered. An instant later came the double reports, sounding like a single one. Through the thin veil of smoke they could note the result of their fire, as they rapidly reloaded.

With the wild, horrible yell that almost invariably accompanies the death throes of an Indian, the leading brave flung aloft his arms and fell headlong from his horse. His nearest comrade dropped heavily upon his mustang's neck, blood gushing from his parched lips and almost smothering the death shriek.

With yells of astonishment and terror, the savages plucked sharply at the jaw-breaking mamelukes, and hastily grasped their weapons. Yet, as Jack Rabbit had foreseen, the thirst-maddened animals plunged blindly forward, entirely beyond control of their masters.

With wonderful rapidity the rifles were reloaded and capped, then, once again, the unerring eyes glanced through the double sights, marking two more red-skins for death.

The same instant Jack Rabbit uttered a shrill whistle. A joyous neigh promptly responded, and crashing through the undergrowth, two horses bounded to their masters' sides. Slinging his rifle on the cantle, Jack Rabbit leaped into the saddle, crying sharply:

"Mount, old man—mount, or they'll ride over us! Don't throw away your life and mine, too!"

It may well be doubted whether any other appeal would have been heeded, for the demon of vengeance was fully aroused in the old hunter's breast. His eyes glared like living coals, his beard was flecked with froth, and a hoarse, snarling sound came from the depths of his chest. Only the deep, intense love which he felt for his protégé could have drawn him from the feast of blood, even though he knew that longer stay could be little less than certain death.

"Mount, Tony—mount, or I swear I'll run a muck bare-handed with the whole caboodle out there! That's the ticket! Give 'em a taste of revolver-soup—hurrah!"

Giving his blood-bay free rein, guiding him only with his knees, Jack Rabbit dashed out into the open ground, discharging shot after shot in rapid succession, sending each leaden pellet home with an unerring certainty that was fairly marvelous. Few men are they who can send bullet after bullet to its flying target from horse-back, but Jack Rabbit had found a rare teacher in big Tony Chew, and, as will presently be shown, the wild life they had followed for years had given them plenty of practice.

The deep, snarling sound growing into a hoarse roar, Tony Chew turned his big buck-skin horse directly toward the yelling, confused savages, a revolver in either hand, and would have charged into their midst, only for the prompt interference of Jack Rabbit, who seized the loose rein and bore the madman to one side. As though unconscious of this, Chew plied his revolvers in quick succession, until the dull click told that the cylinders were empty.

The sudden and deadly attack had utterly demoralized the Indians, and when the two horsemen burst out from the thicket, they swerved and struggled furiously with their thirst-frenzied animals. But to retreat was beyond their power. And then, as no more shots came from the island, as no more horsemen made their appearance, the humiliating truth forced itself upon their minds.

Then, not until they realized that they had been bearded by two men, they bethought themselves of their weapons, and two or three escopette balls whistled by the prairie riders, a dozen arrows hissed through the air; then the horses and riders disappeared, plunging into the thicket.

Laughing loudly, Jack Rabbit tossed his head back as a flint-headed arrow tore through the flying curls beside his ear, and still holding the bridle of his comrade's horse he wheeled swiftly around the timber island, just without arrow-shot.

"They know now who's playing with them, old man Tony, and their proud stomachs'll turn against letting us get off after scaring them so thoroughly. They'll be after us the very moment they can get their ponies away from the water. As though a hop-toad could catch an antelope! You want fun—well, we'll have it, if you'll only promise not to be such a contrary, headstrong—you understand? I don't want to hurt your feelings, but if anybody else'd act as you did, just then, I'd swear he was a thoroughbred fool—so there!"

Chew wiped the froth from his beard, and made a few rapid signs, which were readily interpreted by Jack.

"Good enough! then I'll load up. It's likely we'll need to burn more powder, unless you've got your fill?"

A look of intense hatred passed over the giant's face, and a harsh, guttural sound came from his throat.

"All right; fight it is, then. And not so much fight, either. We can choose our own distance, and if they're fools enough to follow us, we can pick 'em off one by one. Ha! look yonder! Some of the imps are in a hurry to reach their happy hunting-grounds—so! There goes one, by lightning express!" and a reckless laugh parted the young man's lips as he flung forward his rifle and fired at a savage who had just sauntered beyond the friendly cover.

Hard hit, if not killed, the Indian fell back and was quickly drawn under cover. A series of angry yells went up from the thicket, and a moment later the two men could see that some movement was about to take place.

"Ready, old man," sharply spoke Jack Rabbit, as he rammed a bullet home and quickly recapped his rifle. "I do believe they're going to make a charge for it. Just keep beyond the first rush, and all's right. They can't follow us far on this waterlogged craft."

First came the loud, lumbering report of the scorpions, or sort of shortened muskets, carrying a heavy ball; and then, with furious yells, the red-skins charged from the island, urging their ponies with voice and heel, holding their bows ready bended. But at the same moment the two riflemen darted away, and the clear, taunting laugh of Jack Rabbit came floating back to the angry ears of the enemy.

With their horses only in a hand-gallop, the adventurers maintained their distance. As the young plainsman had foreseen, the ponies ran heavily, having drank too much water, despite the efforts of their masters to keep them in trim for a chase.

"Old man," abruptly said Jack Rabbit, "seems to me we're acting the parts of cowards, rather than men. The train can't be many miles ahead, and we're leading these brutes direct for it."

As he spoke, Jack Rabbit pointed before him. Deeply imprinted in the sand was the broad, unmistakable trail of a wagon-train; and yet it would have looked oddly enough to northern eyes. The tracks of the wheels were over a foot in width, uneven and irregular, forming a trail that could be followed through the darkest of nights, by the sense of touch alone. The trail led direct from the timber island, where the party had evidently halted. Now, the two men were riding along it, followed by the yelling savages.

Tony Chew made a rapid series of signs, easily interpreted by his young comrade. Their purport was: if left to themselves, now, the Comanches would undoubtedly follow the broad trail and seek revenge for their losses upon the travelers. Tony proposed to draw them so far from the trail that the party would have time to reach their intended camping-grounds, and so be better prepared for what might follow.

"Your head's level, old man," laughed Jack, as he turned in his saddle to select a mark.

Rightly divining his intention, the savages disappeared behind their ponies, hanging by a foot and a hand. The plainsman laughed, recklessly, as his rifle spoke sharply and a horse and rider fell heavily to the ground.

"Go and do likewise, daddy. A Comanche on foot is like a horse without its sting. Give them a salute and then sheer off to the right. I reckon 'twill make 'em mad enough to leave the big trail."

His last words were drowned by the report of the big scout's rifle, and a horrible death-shriek came to their ears as a dying savage plunged headlong from his seat, caught by the leaden missile before he could entirely cover himself.

"It works—it works!" muttered Jack exultantly, as he saw the entire party heading direct for them, leaving the wagon trail behind them rapidly. "They're letting out a fresh link, too. Those little brutes are tough as sole-leather."

The speed of the pursuers was indeed increasing, strange as it may appear. In fact the Comanches had hurried their ponies away from the water-hole before their thirst was half quenched, so that instead of being "water-logged," the mustangs, desert born and bred, were gaining strength and courage with every stride. Thus swifter and swifter sped the chase over the blazing desert sands.

Jack Rabbit laughed again as he glanced back. A dozen savages had forged far ahead of their comrades. He believed that the draught of cold water was doing its work. But Tony Chew shook his head slowly, and his nimble fingers told a different story. The silent speech was something like this:

"You see, they've cut us off from the trail. To get back into it, we'd have to run the gantlet. Look again. The main body is pressing along the wagon-trail, leaving these dozen bucks to attend to us."

An evil light filled Jack Rabbit's eyes as he saw how adroitly they had been overreached; but it was too late now to act otherwise. Still, hoping to distance their pursuers at least enough to admit of their regaining the wagon-trail by a detour, the two men urged on their animals at full speed.

With dogged perseverance, the Comanches stuck to the chase, though losing ground at every stride. Still, in a long race, a mustang will run down the best blooded horse that ever wore the pig-skin, and the fugitives had already traversed nearly sixty miles of sandy waste since sunrise.

An uneasy light began to fill the old man's eyes, and his nostrils dilated as he rose in his stirrups and cast a keen, sweeping glance before him. At the same moment a wild yell of exultation burst from the Comanches, and they could be seen to ply their plaited whips with redoubled energy.

"What's in the wind now?" sharply demanded Jack Rabbit.

Tony made no reply, but as they thundered on, he shortened his rein, peering keenly forward. The Comanches, riding two and two, now began to spread out upon either hand. A faint line before the fugitives grew rapidly plainer and more distinct. And then the real danger burst upon them.

A wide, deep barranca yawned before them, its sides and bottom marked by sharp, jagged boulders. And the exultant savages came yelling on.

CHAPTER II. A DUEL A LA MORT.

The two plainsmen sharply drew rein. Before them lay the barranca, a chasm over a hundred feet in depth, the sides precipitous and impracticable, the width far too great for mortal horse to leap across. Behind them came the exultant, screeching savages, flogging their jaded beasts to increased speed, holding their weapons ready for use the instant they should draw within range.

"Those fools think they've got the dead-wood on us now," laughed Jack Rabbit, carelessly. "Wonder if they ever saw men fight before?"

Old man Tony used his fingers rapidly. He said that while there was but little doubt that they two, with their revolvers, would be more than a match for the Comanche's bows and arrows, yet he would rather have more room to maneuver in; that in the *melee* one or both of their horses might be killed or disabled, and to be left afloat in the desert would be equivalent to death. Let Jack Rabbit follow him closely, watch his every motion, and imitate him in every respect.

Turning his big yellow horse to the left, Tony Chew raced swiftly along the edge of the canon, closely followed by Jack Rabbit, whose rifle was threatening the foremost Indians.

The Comanches were already within long rifle range, and the two parties were steadily

drawing nearer each other, following the lines of an angle which would meet at a point some two miles ahead, if nothing prevented.

As the range gradually lessened, the Comanches, at every motion of the young man's rifle, would duck down behind the bodies of their laboring ponies. But Jack held his fire. He dared not risk wasting a shot now.

Then a harsh, inarticulate cry from the big borderer arrested his attention, and as he interpreted the rapid sign, a reckless smile chased the dark scowl from his face. He saw now what Chew had been working for, and felt that the game lay in their own hands.

With a shrill yell he whirled his blood bay, and swiftly thundered down upon the nearest Comanches, closely followed by the white-haired giant. Taken by surprise, strung out in a long line, the Comanches moved aside as though about to leave the way clear for the two men; but such was not the case.

The movement was simply to combine their forces, and they were quickly formed in two bodies, between which the fugitives must pass or else check their charge.

"Now, old man Tony," said Jack Rabbit, when they were almost within pistol range of the enemy, "I'll keep 'em in play, while you show the way over. Keep in a straight line beyond, so that I won't make a blunder."

Without a moment's hesitation the white-haired giant wheeled his horse and galloped swiftly back toward the barranca, holding the reins tight drawn, glaring keenly ahead.

A wild yell broke from the Comanches at this unexpected movement, and as with one accord they brandished their weapons and urged their ponies forward. Shutting back a bold defiance, Jack Rabbit leveled his revolver and opened a rapid fusillade upon the charging savages.

Though only one brave fell, badly wounded, the swiftly-recurring shots served to check the Comanches. Sinking from view behind their mustangs' bodies, they separated with the evident intention of cutting off the young plainsman from rejoining his comrade.

A swift glance showed Jack the figure of the big horse and rider cutting through the air like a bird, and he knew that the way was open for his retreat, and none too soon, either. The Comanches were rapidly lessening his slight advantage. Ten seconds later would have been fatal to his hopes.

Despite the imminent peril, the young man's natural recklessness displayed itself in a clear, ringing laugh, as he touched his bay with the spurs, and dashed direct for the canon, as though intent upon committing suicide.

As yet the chasm was concealed from him, but beyond it he saw the big borderer eagerly motioning him on, and knew that he was heading right. Upon each side the Comanches were rapidly drawing nearer, and already their arrows began to hurtle through the air, cutting all around the fugitive. For himself he cared little, but in case even a single arrow should strike his horse, then good-bye to his hopes. He knew that the leap before him would be a severe test of the blood-bay's powers at best; wounded, 'twould become an impossibility.

He did not attempt to clear the way with his revolver, for he knew that his jaded horse would need all his aid in making the leap. So, with clenched teeth and stifled breath he dashed on—on, until the chasm yawned almost beneath his feet, while the arrows whistled viciously around his form.

With a shrill yell he plunged spurs rowel deep into the steaming sides of the blood-bay, and lifting him up by the reins, he shot through the air like a bird.

An angry yell broke from the Comanches as they saw their anticipated victim dwell for a moment over the frightful depth, then strike fair and lightly upon the other side of the barranca, plunging along for a few yards, then drawing up safe and sound beside the big borderer.

The very moment he felt assured Jack Rabbit knew the exact point at which to take his leap, Tony Chew spurred aside and urged his horse up to the very brink of the chasm, snatching his rifle from the high pomel.

Like a bird Jack Rabbit shot past, the yelling Comanches close upon his heels. The white-haired giant coolly selected his target and fired. Death-cricken, the foremost savage fell headlong to the blood-stained sands.

Again uttering that horrid, indescribable sound, the big borderer dropped his rifle across his thighs, drawing a revolver, and sending bullet after bullet into the confused mass of men and beasts, as the two parties met. Still, despite the fact that another of their number fell disabled, the Comanches seemed bent on forcing a passage, and, doubtless, would have succeeded had not Jack Rabbit hastened to the assistance of his comrade. Then, under the rapid fusillade, the red-skins hastily retreated until at a reasonably safe distance.

"We've got the dead-wood on 'em this time, old man," laughed Jack Rabbit, as he brushed the mingled dust and perspiration from his brow. "They'll give us a breathing spell just now, and so, while I'm loading up, you doctor my hump-ribs a bit. 'Twas a young hand sent that—afraid of losing the chance if he waited to pull the arrow to the head—or I'd have got more than a flea-bite."

In truth a feathered shaft was quivering in the young borderer's back, just beneath the left shoulder blade, received while he was hanging in mid-air above the chasm. With an anxious look Tony hastened to examine the wound, his hands trembling far more than when he was facing the savage war-party. But, as Jack Rabbit had said, the wound was little more than skin deep; the arrow had been sent with little force.

Their next move was to carefully inspect the condition of their horses. To their great satisfaction, neither had been touched by the flying arrows, nor had the long race, ending as it had in an uncommon leap for prairie horses, had any other effect than to jade them a little.

"They're ready for a fifty-mile race this minute," cried the enthusiastic Jack Rabbit, as he caressed his loved bay. "But what're those imps up to now?"

When the Comanches retreated before the leaden hailstorm, they gathered together as if for consultation, evidently determined to make another attempt to revenge their fellow bretheren. When Jack made his remark, they had plainly arrived at some conclusion; nor did they waste time in carrying it out.

Their number had been reduced to eleven. Of these, six remained stationary, though still mounted, directly opposite the point where the borderers had leaped the barranca. The other five, after looking carefully to their bows and arrows, set their horses in motion, speeding toward the barranca, but in a line that would strike it some hundred yards above our friends.

"They know of another crossing!" exclaimed Jack, with an inquiring glance at the white-haired giant.

Chew's nimble fingers swiftly replied: that this point was the only one for miles in either

direction narrow enough for mortal horses to cross. By going around, the Comanches could not reach them under twelve hours, at the very least.

"Look! they mean business, sure enough!" cried the young man, as his ready wit divined the plan of the horsemen. "Here—take the horses back yonder—out of bow-shot; give 'em the sign to stay where put."

As he spoke, Jack Rabbit leaped to the ground, and running close to the barranca, flung himself at full length in a slight depression of the sand. Tony Chew obeyed without a sign, trotting rapidly away from the spot.

Stripped to the skin, save for their scanty breechcloths, laying aside their robes, their lances, everything except their bows and arrows, the five Indians now began their portion of the work. One brave set his mustangs in motion, galloping along the edge of the barranca, increasing his speed with every stride.

When within short range of the prostrate adventurer, he sunk quickly behind the body of his horse, and then, as he darted swiftly, sent a brace of arrows whistling viciously over the chasm. Close upon his heels came a second brave, then another and another, each delivering their arrows as they swept by, then swooping around in order to regain their starting point.

Jack Rabbit glanced anxiously over his shoulder, without attempting to return the shots. He saw that the intention was to kill or disable the two horses, as the surest way of securing the pale-faces. But Tony had not been idle, and the feathered shafts all fell short.

Leaving the animals, the giant borderer hastened back and took up his position to the right of his comrade, just as the Comanches were about to make their second charge.

"Pick off their ponies, or they'll keep it up until one of us is pinked, then those other dogs will make a charge for the leap," muttered Jack, as the leading Comanche spurred along.

Crack—crack! In swift succession the two rifles spoke, and held by hands that were well nigh unerring, the two foremost riders were down in a confused heap with their stricken ponies. The following braves, aghast, veered suddenly aside, uttering yells of rage and dismay.

"Now's our time!" cried Jack Rabbit, his eyes flashing, as he uttered a shrill whistle. "What's the use in fooling when one charge will end it all?"

The well-trained horses promptly obeyed the signal, and mounting, Jack Rabbit rushed at the leap, carrying his blood bay over the chasm as cleverly as before, then, drawing his faithful revolver, he thundered down upon the astonished savages, who could scarce believe their senses.

The immense stride of the yellow horse quickly carried him alongside the lighter limbed bay, and then, through a cloud of hastily aimed arrows, the comrades met the Comanches hand to hand.

The rapid detonations of the revolvers, the clatter of the long lances, the thud of hoof-strokes upon the sand, the shrill yells answered by the reckless laugh of Jack Rabbit and the deep growl of the white-haired giant, mingled with the death shriek, the cries and groans of the dying.

Truly it was a duel to the death!

CHAPTER III. THE BUFFALO HUNTERS.

A CHORUS of truly diabolical sounds filled the air. It seemed as though a score of persons, each with a different toned voice, were shrieking aloud in bitter agony, never pausing for breath, even for a moment.

Such sounds coming to the ears of a traveler in that wild and desolate region known as the Llano Estacado—that vast tract of land claimed by no man, yet which is often baptized in blood, whenever the rival tribes of prairie Indians meet within its limits—such sounds would naturally be interpreted as the signals of another dread tragedy. But the rays of the afternoon sun would quickly dissipate such ideas.

A wagon-train was slowly toiling its way across the dry, sandy waste, heading for the now not distant line of broken, rugged rock hills, thinly covered with cedar and other evergreens. A wagon-train, yet not one familiar to northern eyes. The one in question is curious enough to repay a closer inspection.

The train proper was composed of fourteen carts, or technically speaking, *carretas*, each drawn by two yoke of oxen. A description of one, comprises all. The wheels, two in number, are merely rude blocks of wood, cut from the butt of a cottonwood tree, without the slightest attempt at rounding them, other than peeling off the bark, and were from thirty to thirty-six inches in diameter, a foot or more in thickness. In some cases a strip of raw hide had been tacked on as a tire. The wheels, usually nearer square or oval than round, are joined by a stout wooden axle. A long tongue leads out from the axle-tree, a stout bar of wood being lashed to its smaller end. This is again lashed to the horns of the wheel oxen. A deep, square box is secured upon the axle and tongue. When once the clumsy machine is fairly in motion, the noise made by the wooden axles, guiltless of grease, is beyond all description, and has only one equal—a troop of howling monkeys while testing their throats to the utmost.

Besides these primitive carts, there are a number of pack mules, some heavily loaded, others bearing a woman or two or three children. Each team has a driver. Besides, one can distinguish a number of men, some afoot, others upon horseback. All in all, the human souls number full two score.

Who are they? The answer is brief. They are the BUFFALO HUNTERS. A few words concerning this peculiar people, then for rapid action and brief delays.

For over a century these buffalo-hunters (*ciboleros*) have been a separate and distinct race, the business generally descending from father to son, generation after generation, though occasionally one more enterprising would make a fortune and end his days as a *rico*. These men were to the frontier of Mexico pretty much what the trapper and pioneer have been to the Anglo-American settlements. The outfit of the buffalo hunter is widely different from that required by his northern prototype. Of fire-arms he knows little and cares less—as a rule. A short, tough bow with a quiver full of keen, steel-headed arrows; a long lance; a stout knife and a lasso. A well-trained horse is essential, and many a ragged, greasy *cibolero* has been seen astride an animal well-nigh worth its weight in gold, when not a *claco* could be found in his pockets.

The buffalo-hunter is also a trader—in fact, this is his main dependence. The Comanches, Apaches, Pawnees, and other tribes know their object in venturing so far beyond the limits of civilization, and, as a general thing,

encourage the traders to come among them. Yet, through a wanton love of displaying their power, the savages do too frequently do all the trading themselves, cheating and abusing the adventurers, sometimes ending all disputes by a massacre. Still, these lessons are soon forgotten, and the *ciboleros* risk their lives, their little all, again and again. Sometimes a large company of these traders combine their stock, taking with them their wives and families, until, only for the horrible shrieking carretas, they might be mistaken for a migrating Indian tribe.

The trading stock of the *cibolero* is very limited. Some sacks of coarse bread, which most prairie Indians consider a delicious luxury; a quantity of *pinole* (parched corn, ground and mixed with water and sugar); a few baubles of glass and brass; some coarse, high-colored blankets and cloths, and a few Spanish knives with their painted triangular blades.

Such is—or rather was, for the race is almost extinct—the *cibolero* of New Mexico, and his equipage and following.

A tall, dark-bearded man, fine looking, even through the thick covering of tan and dust, was urging his driver to hasten the progress of the train, when a rider spurred to his side and spoke a few hasty words:

"Father, we are not alone. Look—a dust cloud!"

"I know, Rosina; my eyes are open. I saw the sign a mile back, and for that reason I am hurrying up the train to reach the rocks before—"

"There is danger, then?"

"There is always danger when one's eyes are closed. We are in a bad part of the desert. It is here that the Mad Chief, as they call him, rides often. But rest easy. We are strong and well armed. Even if yonder party be his following, there is little to fear. We will clip his wings and rid the desert of a foul scourge. Only—I would rather we were at the rocks, yonder."

Father and daughter rode on side by side in silence, though with many a backward glance. Don Felipe Raymon was a devout believer in signs and omens, and had not forgotten his evil dream of the past night. Only for that dream he would have welcomed that dust cloud as token of an advantageous trade.

Though scenting water, the jaded oxen toiled slowly and wearily on with their loads, the clumsy carts creaking in horrible concert with the loud cracking whips and voluble curses of the dark-skinned drivers. The friendly rocks grew nearer, but so did the desert cloud, and ere long Don Raymon realized the utter folly of continuing such a race. To keep on would only expose his fear, and none knew better than he how prone even the most friendly Indians were to take advantage of such a weakness.

He gave the signal to halt, and then for the women and children to keep close to the middle carts, while the men, thoroughly armed, stood around ready either for peaceful trade or warlike blows.

"They're Comanches, senior," respectfully ventured a little grizzled *cibolero*. "You can see their long hair."

The Comanches do not shave any portion of their heads, merely braiding the scalp-lock, allowing the long lock to float freely down their shoulders. Some of them even splice the hair, using that cut from the heads of captives for the purpose.

"Rather than those cursed Pawnees, under that devil, the Mad Chief, eh, Pepe?" smiled Don Raymon.

"They say he has horns and a forked tail—holy mother, protect us!" muttered Pepe, crossing himself.

The Indian party was now distinctly visible and their number could almost be counted. They came on at a steady gallop, though their animals gave unmistakable signs of a long, arduous journey, for the frequently-applied thongs of cowhide could not quicken their pace in the least.

"Bid the men keep on guard, Pepe," muttered the leader, an anxious light in his eye. "The heretics do not act natural. They seem in deadly earnest."

Contrary to their habitual customs of greeting a party of friends with a display of horse-manship and *fartarronde*, the Comanches galloped up in silence, the party dividing, one half passing round the train as if to out off their further retreat, while the other portion, under lead of a tall, heavily-bearded man, drew rein within short arrow-shot of the wagons.

Don Raymon immediately rode forward a few yards, making a signal of peace, which was responded to by the bearded man, who urged his panting mustang forward.

"You are the chief of this party?" he demanded, in fair enough Spanish, with a keen glance into Raymon's face.

"Yes, senior—and you, if I mistake not, are a countryman of mine?" was the prompt reply.

"No—I am a Comanche chief," fiercely rejoined the renegade. "If I once consorted with dogs and the sons of dogs, I do so no longer, and if you are wise, you will bridle your tongue or it may cause you trouble. Bid your men stand out in full view. Never mind my reasons—I'm not in the least agreeable humor just now, and the less trouble you give us the better it will be for you."

This insolent speech stuck in the Mexican's throat, and it was only by remembering that his dear ones—his wife and children—were so near, that he could choke down his anger. For a moment he was strongly tempted to give the signal for his men to fire, for he saw that his force was fully equal to that of the renegade; but, policy forbade. Even if he were to defeat this party, a single survivor would be enough to bring the entire Comanche tribe down upon him, long before he could escape from the desert.

"There's another one on horseback, who hides his face," sharply added the renegade, pointing to the figure of Rosina, who had covered her face with a corner of her *manga*.

"That is a woman—my daughter."

"Perhaps. Bid her show her face, then," and the renegade pressed forward to where the maiden sat, astride her horse, as is usual with all Mexican women save those of the higher order.

With a sharp, angry cry, a beardless youth of some fifteen summers, pushed his horse before that of Rosina, and threatened the renegade with leveled rifle.

"Back—dare to touch my sister and I'll shoot you like a coyote!" he said, in a low, stern voice.

"Pablo—he will kill you!" cried Rosina, dropping the friendly *manga* and clutching her brother's arm.

The renegade shrunk back from the threatening weapon, but a glow of brutal admiration overspread his rugged features as he caught sight of that almost peerless beautiful face.

"I am satisfied, Senior," he said, turning quickly toward the frowning *cibolero*, whose hand was resting upon a half-drawn knife,

while the other men were pushing forward with scowling looks and muttered threats. "But keep your men at a more respectful distance, and teach this boy better manners. He crows too loud for a young cock."

"He is his father's son, and knows how to avenge an insult," hotly retorted Pablo.

"Peace, my son," said Don Raymon, with a gesture of command. "And now, senior, since I have complied with your request, what is your wish? We are only poor *ciboleros*, come here to hunt the buffalo, and to trade with our friends, the Indians. But it is a rule with us to give as much as we receive, whether in peaceful barter or stout blows."

"Yours is a nimble tongue, at least," sneered the renegade. "But enough. Where are the rest of your company?"

"You have seen them all; there are no others."

"Be careful. I know more than you suspect. There are two men belonging to your company not now present. One is a white-haired giant, the other a young man. They ride large horses, one a buckskin, the other a blood-bay. When and where are they to join you again?"

"I have already said that I know no such persons."

"And lied in saying so. Stop! Touch a weapon or make one false motion, and 'twill be your last act on earth. Look at my braves. They are in a pleasant humor just now. There's blood in their eyes, and a single motion of my hand is enough to make them charge; you can imagine the rest. They are the choicest warriors of the Comanche nation."

"Once more—what do you wish?" impatiently demanded the buffalo-hunter, with difficulty subduing his rising anger.

"That is easy told. Your two friends are our bitter enemies. To-day, as we approached the water-hole—where you halted last night—they fired at us from an ambush, and killed some of my braves. Their horses had been resting; ours were nearly worn out. They fled, like cowards, pursued by a portion of my band. They may escape, their horses are so much fresher; but in any case the blood of the dead must be avenged. Those men must die, though they seek to hide in the center of the earth."

"I know nothing of them. You must settle the matter between yourselves," coldly responded the *cibolero*.

"That answer will not satisfy my braves. They believe that these two men belong to your company, and so do I. They are generous; for when they might easily kill or capture you all, they are satisfied to demand only two bodies as hostages, to be held until you deliver up the real criminals."

"Indeed! And if we refuse?" sneered Raymon.

The renegade uttered a shrill cry. Like magic every bow was bent, an arrow drawn to the head. Another cry caused the weapons to be lowered, almost before the *ciboleros* could realize it at all.

"You see—the answer is plain. There can be no refusal, since a refusal means death. You are helpless. We are able to take far more than what we ask. Be sensible, then, and give up the two hostages."

"If we consent—I say *if*—which ones would you select?" slowly asked Don Raymon, like one wishing to gain time for thought.

"Those who will insure your keeping the compact. I select these two," and the renegade pointed out Rosina and Pablo. "Give them to us, with your solemn pledge, and all will be well."

"Never—a thousand times never!" screamed the enraged father, as he flashed forth a knife. The renegade bounded back, causing his horse to rear so as to protect his body, and at the same time repeating his cry. Instantly the signal was answered by the terrible Comanche war-whoop!

(To be continued.)

SONG.

BY GEORGE.

Brief and hot were the words we spoke,
Few and cold were the tears we shed,
Then I tore my heart from its anchorage
And away to the wars I sped.

Away! Away! to the battlefields
Where I fought with a bitter pride;
Men said, "He fights like a tiger bold."
But I envied the man who died!

The years rolled on. Once more I stood
In the shade of the willow tree,
My country safe, my flag redeemed,
But, what was there left for me?

The brook ran on, the sun shone warm,
The birds sang loud and sweet
As when, in the golden days of old,
I lay at my darling's feet.

Can true love die? Is regret a myth?
Is a guilt made from a word, causing
Then like the stir of autumn leaves
A rustling sound I heard?

Dear heart! 'twas she; and one deep look
Retold the story true,
That love, though old as mother earth,
Is yet forever new!

Happy Harry,

THE WILD BOY OF THE WOODS;

OR,
The Pirates of the Northern Lakes.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "IDABO TOM," "DAKOTA DAN,"
"BOWIE-KNIFE BEN," "OLD HURRICANE,"
"HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.—CONTINUED.

THIS news well-nigh crazed the father. He walked the deck and wept tears of bitterest agony. Margery, too, was almost prostrated by the news, while Captain Rankin seemed inwardly suffering the tortures of death. He sprang from his couch, his feeble body stimulated by the sad tidings, and rushed on deck; but this strength was unnatural—the force of excitement, and he soon sunk under a relapse of the most aggravating nature.

"We must never leave here till we know what has become of her, general," Harry said, after discussing the matter

One was a very small footprint, and had been made with a moccasined foot. This discovery gave Long Beard cause for alarming apprehensions, and further search served to strengthen his fears. They found other moccasin-tracks in abundance, which proved beyond doubt that a band of savages had been upon the island. Carrying their investigations still further, they found a spot that had been the scene of a deadly conflict. The ground was torn up; there was blood upon the leaves and bushes, and fragments of clothing strewn about.

"There, general, there is the very spot where Belshazzar had his skirmish, and from looks of things they both made the fur fly. Great, hopin' horns! I'll bet it was lively 'bout the time they spun through that thicket what ye can see some slices of Injin and clumps of fur stickin' on the bushes. Bell makes a nasty fight—chaws away without any regard for jugular veins and such machinery. He's a leetle rude and barbarous-like in sich things. He's never had a thorough trainin' on the mode of civilized warfare, therefore he has no choice 'bout doin' up a death for a red-skin. It's my opinion, however, that we'll not find your daughter here, for I think the red varmints have carried her away."

Long Beard groaned in spirit.

"Oh, my poor child! why does God punish me so?" he exclaimed, pressing his throbbing temples.

"You may feel very thankful that the British didn't get her, general. The Indians are ornery bald-faced varmints, but they do most always treat young white gals kindly in their way—especially such angels as your Temple is. But, there's no telling what them red-mouthed foreigners 'd do."

"I would rather see her die than fall into Kirby Kale's power," groaned the father.

"You know that feller, don't you, Big Beard? you fear his power, don't you?"

"He is a Nemesis to me, Harry."

"A—what?"

"A curse that pursues me, haunts me—the fiend incarnate that made me an exile—a reclusé—a hunted wretch!"

"Oh, great horns, Big Beard!" exclaimed Harry, sympathetically; "you and me have met off and on nightly two years. We've been like the needle to the pole to'd each other—right there; and I'm awful sorry to hear this. But, I always thought you'd trouble our mind; and, general, if Kirby Kale is the cause of that trouble, I can eradicate it as effectually as though Kale had never been born. I'll engage to hoist his hair afore two more moons; I will for a polished fact."

"Do not stain your hands with human blood, Harry, however vile it may be, unless in self-defense or in a just cause."

"Why, wouldn't it be in a just cause to stop Kale's respiration? Ar'n't he in battle-array against our country? Don't he fly the rag of England? while I throw to the breeze the stars and stripes of ole Hail Columbia Yankee Doodle! I'm an American patriot, general—me and Belshazzar are, and for the cause of our kentry we'll fight till the cows come home. No, no, general; I don't see as it would be wrong for me to put Kirby Kale on the list of royal dead, and henceforth I shall keep an eye open for that foreign Johnny jump-up. But then, we must look further for your Temple—don't give up till we know she is gone."

"Yes; let us look further. We may find her dead," said the white-bearded man, sadly.

They moved on, searching every step of ground for some evidence of the girl's fate. Carefully they approached the cabin and entered it. It had been plundered of everything worth carrying away, and an attempt had been made to fire the building. They also found that the giant's sail-boat was gone, which left no doubt in their minds but that the enemy had all disappeared from the vicinity, carrying the captive with them.

Happy Harry climbed to the top of the tallest tree on the island, and from this point he could command a tolerable view of the whole group of islands that dotted the lake. The first thing that caught his eyes was a thin column of white smoke rising above the tree-tops on an island a mile or more north of them.

"I see a smoke, general," he exclaimed, "over there on the furthest island."

"Indeed! what does it imply?"

"Well, it's not the smoke of a recent camp-fire, that's plain to be seen. The red varmints that got your gal might have spent the night there and left a smoldering camp-fire, or else Kirby Kale, after turnin' tail on the 'S-out,' might have dropped in there to wait for daylight. I'll bet it's one or t'other, and maybe both. If they are there yet, they'll be apt to stay there till night; they'll not venture out as long as the brig, now an American fish, swims around in this vicinity. So I'll keep a watch here, and if I see any change in the color and volume of that smoke about noon or after, I'll know the fire's been replenished, and then as soon as convenient, I'll figure off in that direction. And now, general, I'd suggest, in order to throw them varmints off their guard, if they are watchin' the 'S-out,' that you return to the boat and run south eight or ten leagues, and return durin' the night. That'll give me more chances to figure."

"Harry, my brave boy, I will do as you suggest. I have implicit faith in you and your knowledge of frontier life and skill in circumventing the enemy, therefore I will go at once to the brig."

"Good-by, general!"

"Good-by, and may God bless you."

The giant turned and moved away, leaving the brave little fellow and his faithful dog alone upon the island.

CHAPTER XX.

THE JEALOUS PRINCESS.

We will now go back and look after Tempy, whom we left on the island, with no one but Harry's faithful dog to keep her company. It was with no little reluctance that she consented to remain behind, but she knew that both Harry and Lieutenant Reeder acted in the best of faith in leaving her there; so the peerless little maiden was concealed in a clump of branching oaks, Belshazzar at her side. She soon made friendship with the dog by kind words and gentle caresses. He crouched at her feet as if assuming the guardianship of her safety.

Tempy sat down upon the gnarled root of the oak, and leaned her head against the tree. She was tired—almost exhausted. The day's journey and the night's perils had been more than her feeble strength could withstand without wearing upon her. Her physical strength was not equal to her courage. Moreover, she was laboring under a terrible suspense; she was troubled about the fate of her father and sister. Nor was this all that weighed upon her. The face of Captain Rankin, pale and wan, yet handsome in its manly beauty, haunted her young heart like the vision of a dream, and some aching, longing desire filled her breast. She wept over the fate of her

friends, but when her thoughts reverted to the young captain, she choked down emotions that she had never before experienced. Young as she was, love had fettered her innocent, guileless heart, though she was scarcely aware of the fact.

She sat thinking, taking no note of time, nor dreaming of danger, until the dog at her feet started with a low growl. She listened with bated breath. She heard a faint rustle of the bushes near.

The dog growled again.

"Pale-face, pale-face!" suddenly called a soft, feminine voice, evidently that of an Indian speaking English.

Tempy's heart ceased almost to beat, and it was some moments before she could recover sufficiently to reply.

"Who calls?" she finally made out to ask.

"Me—your friend Eeleelah, the Indian girl, the princess of the Ottawas."

"What seeks Eeleelah?" returned Tempy, with an air of relief.

"Her white sister."

"Then come nearer, and tell me why you seek me."

"But your dog growls fierce—he bite Eeleelah."

Tempy spoke to Belshazzar, and he at once became quiet, when, with that characteristic precaution of her race, the Indian maiden crept softly and shyly toward Tempy. As she came nearer, the white girl asked:

"How did the princess know I was here?"

She spoke familiarly of the Indian girl, for she was not unknown at the island home.

"I saw you come here in the boat of the Long Knives. I followed you."

"Ah! then it was your boat we saw following us like a tiny speck on the water? But why have you followed me here?"

"Why does the bird seek its mate in the woods?"

"Because it loves the one it seeks, I would think."

"That is why Eeleelah is here."

"Then I am the one sought?"

"No, it is the master of that dog," interrupted the princess; "but I would rather find you now than him," and her voice lowered to a strange whisper.

"I welcome my red sister; I am in trouble. The English have robbed my home."

"That is not as bad as to rob one's heart."

Tempy was surprised at this reply. She knew there was a hidden meaning in the words, but she could not imagine what it could be.

"I do not understand you, Eeleelah," she said.

"My white sister's tongue is crooked, like all the pale-faces but the Wild Boy's. Why is that dog here?"

"His master left him to protect me."

"Then the Wild Boy loves you?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"My white sister knows—she has won his heart—stole it away from Eeleelah," and her voice was tinged with bitter sadness.

Tempy now divined what the girl was aiming at—that a feeling of jealousy rankled in her young heart like a poisoned shaft.

"Eeleelah is mistaken," she said. "I do not love the white boy. I never met him till since the night set in."

"That is long enough to learn to love. Three suns ago a bad white man struck Eeleelah down in the woods because she would not love him. He covered her with leaves and brush where the shadows were deep. He thought the eye of the Great Spirit would not find her there. But he sent the Wild Boy that way, and his dog scented the blood where Eeleelah fell, and led his master to where she lay with a cloud on her brain. But he soon drove it away as the sun in his eyes shone down into Eeleelah's heart and made her love him. And now her white sister would steal that love away."

"I would not, Eeleelah, stand between you and the Wild Boy of the Woods."

"But do you not wait his coming here?"

"I do," replied Tempy.

"You will never see him here," the princess said. Then she began murmuring, as if to herself, growing louder and louder until she broke into a plaintive chant. This she kept up for several moments, to the surprise and terror of Tempy. When she had ceased, footsteps were heard approaching through the undergrowth.

Belshazzar started up and growled fiercely. Tempy shrunk back and turned to flee, but Eeleelah seized her by the arm and held her fast.

"What do you mean, Eeleelah?" the maiden cried; "release me!"

Eeleelah made no answer. The crashing in the undergrowth came nearer; friends of the princess were approaching. Belshazzar dashed forward and became engaged in a terrible encounter with a savage. Others came on and seized the now terrified Tempy. They were all Ottawas, friends of the jealous Eeleelah.

Tempy shrieked for help, but no friendly ear save that of Belshazzar heard her. Already the dog had seized an Ottawa by the throat, and together they rolled upon the earth. The contest would have been of short duration between the animal and warrior had not others come to the assistance of their dying friend. Two of them threw themselves upon the dog, and in deadly contest whirled and crashed through the undergrowth in rapid evolutions. The struggle had lasted for some moments when the dog managed to elude the grasp of his enemies and escaped in the darkness, as if conscious of his inability to cope with such overwhelming numbers.

Tempy was carried away across the island. Stopping at the cabin, the savages plundered it of everything that would be of use to them. Then they fired the building and hurried to their boats, expecting to be far away ere the blazing cabin lit up the surrounding gloom. To their disappointment, however, the fire went out, and surmising that it had been extinguished by enemies who were upon the island, they pushed westward among the islands.

Tempy sat in the boat, weeping bitterly. So suddenly had the blow fallen upon her that she could scarcely realize the terrible truth. To Eeleelah she attributed all her trouble. The girl's jealousy had made her treacherous and merciless. She would listen to no reason nor truth from the lips of the innocent girl.

The Indians were all young warriors, and seemed not only willing, but anxious to obey the mandates of the fair princess. By her direction they paddled along through the islands, and finally landed upon one of the largest of the group—for what purpose we will see.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHO SHOT HARRY?

It required but a few minutes for the savages to effect a landing, remove their booty and fair little captive ashore and beach their boat. This done, they advanced to the interior of the island, and selecting a little opening in the dense woods, went into camp. Out

of the bed-clothing taken from Tempy's home, a kind of a lodge was constructed for the captive, and Eeleelah, with every sense sharpened by her burning jealousy, constituted herself watch over the prisoner's apartment.

In the heart of the forest, where no breath of air stirred, gnats and musketoes and insect-life of annoying nature, gathered in swarms and harassed the warriors until it became necessary to strike a fire or smudge to drive the pestiferous insects away. Surrounded on all sides, as they were, by dense vegetation, the warriors had no fear of the light betraying them. The usual precautions, however, were not neglected. Guards were posted at points where enemies were most likely to approach, and after a short deliberation over their pipes, most of the band stretched themselves upon the ground and slept. The sentinels were relieved at intervals, so that each performed his share of duty and received his share of rest. There was but one in the party whose eyes were not closed that night—Eeleelah, the princess. She would not be relieved of her watch over Tempy, but sat the whole night through, bolt upright, a living statue of patience and unyielding determination, watching her captive rival as she tossed and moaned in a troubled sleep.

Thus the night wore away.

With the first streaks of dawn every savage was astir. By permission of her relentless guard, Tempy was conducted down to the water's edge, where she made a thorough ablution, which proved quite refreshing to both mind and body.

While here alone, she said to Eeleelah:

"What are you going to do with me, Eeleelah?"

"Take you to the village of the Ottawas."

"Why will you not let me go to my people?"

"Where are your people? where is your home?"

"I know not," Tempy responded, bursting into tears.

"Oh, Eeleelah!" she finally cried, "I know why you keep me a close prisoner. You love the Wild Boy of the Woods, and think I do also—that I stand between you and him. Be at once undressed, Eeleelah; I love another—not Happy Harry—and if you would win and hold his love, take me to my people. He will search for me, and if he finds me, the captive of Eeleelah's people, he will hate her. I know the pale-face heart."

"Does the pale-face speak the truth?" she asked.

"I call the Great Spirit to bear witness to what I have said being true," replied Tempy.

"My pale-face sister should have told me this before—when we stood alone upon the island and beneath the shadows of last night; then Eeleelah's heart would not have grown so hard, and she would not have called the warriors that were near."

"Eeleelah's ears were deaf last night with her feelings of revenge, and she would not hear me. But then, it is not too late to free me yet, and then the princess can seek her lover, and I mine."

"The young chief, Gray Fox, is your lover now?" Eeleelah said, affecting regret. "It is too late to free my white sister, for she has become entwined in the heart of the young chief. He will make her his wife when he returns from the war-path."

At this juncture a warrior appeared and requested the immediate return of the maidens to camp, with which request they at once complied.

A fire had been lighted, and a number of wild pigeons, procured in the woods, had been dressed and roasted for their meal. Tempy did not refuse to eat, for the roasted birds were too tempting to her hunger. She ate with relish, and the tender food gave her new strength and new hope.

Since their interview by the water, she noticed that Eeleelah had become somewhat downcast and thoughtful. Tempy's words had painfully impressed her.

Breakfast dispatched, all but five or six warriors entered their boat and pushed off among the islands, evidently on some expedition.

Tempy was consigned to her lodge, and a warrior detailed as guard, for the princess seemed to have lost all desire to perform that duty further.

The day wore slowly on; it was past noon, when the faint report of a rifle on an adjacent island enlisted the attention of the red-skins. As it was not repeated, however, no serious apprehensions arose, and all relaxed into their wonted silence and patient waiting for the return of the expedition.

The afternoon had worn nearly away when the patter of feet suddenly started the encampment. To the surprise of all, a large dog bounded into their midst. It was Belshazzar, the dumb companion of Happy Harry. He stopped, and looking imploringly up into the savages' faces, uttered a low bark, wagged his tail, then, turning, bounded away again into the woods.

The red-skins were awe-stricken by this unexpected movement of the great mastiff. Eeleelah uttered a little cry of surprise, and rose to her feet. For a moment she gazed after the fleeing dog, then started to follow him. But she had scarcely taken a dozen steps ere the dog again appeared in sight. He was walking backward and appeared to be dragging something that taxed his power to its utmost extent.

In an instant every savage was on foot. Eeleelah, who was nearest the dog, suddenly uttered a cry, that was repeated time and again until it was prolonged into a piercing shriek. She recognized the object that the dog was dragging. It was a lifeless human body. It was the body of Happy Harry, the Wild Boy of the Woods! He was covered with blood. His hair was all soaked and dragged. His face was covered almost beyond recognition with dirt and gore. His clothing was tattered and torn and thoroughly saturated with blood.

His dumb friend had seized him by one leg, and in this manner dragged him along the rough ground, through the brush, into the very heart of the Indian camp!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 801.)

Erminie:

or,

THE GIPSY QUEEN'S VOW.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AN AW-
FUL MYSTERY," "VICTORIA," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE OUTLAW'S WIFE.

For some moments Pet continued to struggle violently, but finding all his efforts vain—worse than vain—and being half-suffocated for want of air, she fell back in her captor's arms, and lay perfectly still and quiet.

In that dreadful moment, she lost not one particle of her customary self-possession. She realized all her danger and peril vividly. She knew she was completely in the power of her worst enemy, and beyond all hope of extricating herself. Her whole appalling danger burst upon her at once; and though for one instant her very heart seemed to cease its beating, she neither fainted nor gave herself up to useless tears or hysterics, according to the usual custom of young ladies, when in real or imaginary danger. Not she, indeed! Pet's thoughts as she lay quietly in her captive's arms, ran somewhat after the following fashion:

"Well, Pet, child, you've went and put your foot in it beautifully, haven't you? Ain't you ashamed of yourself, to let Rozzel Garnet catch you, and lug you along like this! I wonder where they're going to bring me to, anyway, and what they're going to do with me next! Oh! won't there be weeping and gnashing of teeth, and pulling off of wigs at home when they find I've gone, vanished, evaporated, made myself 'thin air,' and no clue to my whereabouts to be found? Phew! this villainous shawl is fairly smothering me. I wish I could slip it off for about five minutes; and the way I'd yell would slightly astonish Mr. Garnet. I suppose papa will have flaming posters stuck up all around Judestown, in every color of the rainbow. I fancy I'm reading one of them: 'Lost, strayed, stolen, or run off with some deluded young man, a small, brown, yellow and black girl, not quite right in her head, wearing a red-and-green silk dress, with black eyes, a pair of gaiter boots, and black hair. Any person or persons giving information concerning the above will be liberally rewarded with from five to ten cents, and possess the everlasting gratitude of the community generally.' That's it! I wonder where they're taking me to? We're down on the beach now, for I can hear the waves on the shore. Good gracious! If they should carry me off to sea, the matter would be serious. 'Pon my word and honor! if I ever get out of this scrape, if I don't make Mr. Rozzel Garnet mind what he's up to, then my name's not Pet—Ur-r-r! I'm strangling, I declare. Suffocation must be a pleasant death, if I may judge by this specimen!"

While Pet was thus cogitating, Rozzel Garnet and his companion were rapidly striding over the wet, slippery beach. A being more perfectly guileless than Pet, in some ways, never existed, and this may in some measure account for the light manner in which she treated her captivity. Saucy, spirited, daring, full of exuberant life, fun, freedom and frolic, she was; but, withal, in some matters her simplicity was perfectly wonderful. For instance, she knew now she was a prisoner; she fancied she might be taken off somewhere, or held captive for a while. But she had the most perfect faith in her own wit, cunning and courage to ultimately escape. She feared no worse fate; she knew of none; she never even dreamed of any. She knew Rozzel Garnet pretended to love her—might urge her again to marry him; but that gave her not the slightest uneasiness in the world. In fact, Pet's love of adventure made her almost like this scrape she had got into. It would be something to talk about for the rest of her life; it made her quite a heroine, this being carried off; it was really like something she had so often read of in novels, or like a tragedy in a play.

With these sentiments, Pet lay quite still, listening intently, and wondering what was to come next. It seemed to her that they must have walked nearly half an hour, when they came to a dead halt, and she heard Rozzel Garnet say:

"Now, Bart, give the signal quick!"

A low, shrill, peculiar whistle followed; and then Pet, whose ears would have run themselves into points to hear the better, if she could, heard a rustling, as if of bushes pushed aside; a heavy sound, as if of rocks removing; and then Garnet, gathering her tighter in his hated embrace, stooped down, and passed through something which she knew must be a narrow aperture, and thence, carefully guiding himself with one hand, while he held her with the other, he descended a short flight of steps. Then he paused, and to the great relief of our half-stifled heroine, removed the thick shawl in which he had enveloped her. Pet's first use of her breath was to burst out angrily with:

"Well, it's a wonder you took the blamed thing off until you choked me dead! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mr. Garnet, smothering a young lady this way, in a big blanket like that. I wish you'd let me go. I don't want to be carried like a baby any longer."

"Not so fast, pretty one," said Garnet, in a low tone of mocking exaltation. "Be in no haste to quit these arms, for they are to be your home for the future."

"Humph! a pretty home they would be!" said Pet, contemptuously. "You'll have to consult me about that, Mr. Rozzel Garnet. Let me go, I tell you! I want to walk. A body might as well let a bear carry them as you!"

"As you please, my pretty lady-love!" said Garnet. "I do not think you will escape so easily this time as you did the last! That was your hour of victory: this is mine. Then you said neither earth, air, fire, nor water could hold you. Perhaps stout walls of rock can?"

"Don't be too sure, Mr. Garnet. There is such a thing as blowing up rocks, or an earthquake might happen, or the sea might overflow, or you and all your brothers in villainy might get paralytic strokes, or Satan might come and carry off the whole of you bodily to your future home. I'm sure I wish he would. You'll be an ornament to it when you get there—a 'burning and shining light,' in every sense of the word! Ain't you proud of yourself to have carried off a little girl so beautifully? When you found you couldn't do it alone you got another to help you; and so you bravely won the battle. Two great, big men to carry off one little girl! What an achievement! What a victory! You ought to have a leather medal and a service of tin plate presented to each of you! Oh my!" said Pet, in tones of withering irony.

Had it not been pitch dark where they stood, Pet would have seen his sallow face blanch with anger; but subduing his rage in the comforting thought that this little double-refined essence of audacity was completely in his power, he smiled an evil and most sinister smile, and replied:

"Jet, flash, and sparkle, little grenade! Dart fire, little stiletto, but you can do no more! Snarl and show your white teeth, little kitten; but your claws are shielded—you cannot bite now. Expand your wings, my bright little humming-bird; but you will find them clipped. Try to soar to your native heaven, my dazzling, glorious bird of paradise; and your drooping plumes will fall, fluttering and earth-stained to the dust."

"Well, that all sounds mighty fine, Mr. Garnet, and is a grand flourish of rhetoric on

your part. I make no doubt but you'll excuse me if I don't understand a single blessed word of it. You're a schoolmaster, and, of course, ought to understand what's proper; but your grand tropes and figures of speech are all a waste of powder and shot when addressed to me. Just talk in plain English, and don't keep on calling me names, and I'll feel greatly obliged. What a grenade and all them other things are I haven't the remotest idea; but I expect they're something dreadful bad, or you wouldn't keep calling me them. It's real impudent in you to talk so; and I wonder you ain't ashamed of yourself, Rozzel Garnet!"

"No, you don't understand, Miss Lawless," he said slowly, and with the same evil smile. "Shall I tell you in plainer words my meaning?"

"No, you needn't bother yourself," said Pet, shortly. "The less you say to me the better I'll like it. I'm not in the habit of talking to the offcasts of society, such as you are, Mr. Garnet; and, like frog-soup, though it does well enough for a time, one doesn't like it as a constant thing."

"Here, push on! push on!" said the gruff voice of Black Bart behind them. "No use standing palavering here all night. Get along, Rozzy, boy, and taking this little snapping-turtle along with you. Up with the glim, Jack, till ma'm'selle sees where she's going."

All this time they had been wrapped in the blackness of Tartarus, but now the two men descended the stone steps, and one of them, holding up a dark-lantern, let its rays stream around. Pet curiously cast her eyes about and saw she was in a narrow, rocky passage, with her head not more than an inch from the top. How far it led she could not tell, for the rays of light penetrated but a few feet, and beyond that stretched a black, yawning chasm that might have been the entrance into Pandemonium itself.

"Now, in we goes," said Black Bart, giving Pet a slight push forward. "Go first, Rozzy, lad, and show little mustard-seed, here, the way. Jack and I will keep in your wake."

"Mustard-seed and snapping-turtle," muttered Pet, as she prepared to follow Garnet.

"Pet, my dear, you will have as many aliases before long as the most notorious blackleg from here to the Cannibal Islands. Well, if I'm not in a fix to-night! What will they say at home?"

As they went on the passage grew wider and broader, until at last Pet found herself in a spacious rock-bound apartment, well lighted, rudely furnished, and occupied by some half-dozen rough, hard-looking men in the garb of sailors. They were lying in various attitudes about the floor, with the exception of two, who sat at a rough deal-table playing cards.

They turned their eyes carelessly enough as Rozzel Garnet entered; but as their eyes fell upon Pet each man sprung to his feet, and stared at her in undisguised wonder.

There she stood, in the full glare of the light; her slender, girlish form drawn up to its full height; her brilliant silk dress flashing and glittering in the light; her short, dancing, flashing curls of jet falling around her crimson cheeks; her bright, undaunted black eyes wide open, and returning every stare as composedly as though she were sitting in her father's hall, and these men were her servants. Very much out of place looked Pet, in her rich, sherry robes and dazzling beauty, amid those roughly-clad, savage-looking men, and in that dismal underground apartment.

"Where is she?" asked Rozzel Garnet, unheeding their blank stare of surprise.

"Who!—the misses?" asked one of the men, without removing his eyes from Pet.

"Yes—of course."

The man pointed to the remote end of the room; and Pet, turning her eyes in that direction, saw a sort of opening in the wall, serving evidently for a door, and covered by a screen of thick, dark baize.

Garnet went toward it and called:

"Madame Marguerite."

"Well," said a woman's voice from within, with a strong foreign accent.

"Can I see you a moment, on business?"

"Yes—enter." And Pet saw a small, delicate-looking hand push aside the screen, and Garnet disappeared within.

"Here, little nettle, sit down," said Black Bart, pushing a stool toward Pet, gallantly, with his foot. "How do you like the looks of this here place, young woman?"

"Well," said Pet, "I should say there was no danger of thieves breaking in at night; and by the look of things, I don't expect they would find much for their pains, if they did break in. There's no danger of its blowing down windy nights—is there?"

"Well, no, I reckon there isn't," said Black Bart, with a grin, "seeing it's right under a hill, and nothing but solid rocks above and below."

"A strong foundation," said Pet; "like the true Church, it's built on a rock. I should think it would be damp, though, when the tide rises and fills it; and as I am subject to rheumatism—"

"No danger," said Bart. "I'll risk your drowning. There! Garnet's calling you. Go in there."

Pet arose, and Garnet, holding back the baize screen, motioned her to enter. She obeyed and looked curiously around.

The room was smaller than the one she had left and better furnished. The rocky floor was covered with India matting, and chairs, couches, and tables were strewn indiscriminately around. A bed with heavy curtains stood in one corner, and a stand containing books, writing materials, and drawing utensils stood opposite. Pet gave all these but a fleeting glance, and then her whole attention was caught and occupied by the person who stood between them, with one hand resting on the back of a chair, and her eyes fixed with a sort of stern, haughty scrutiny on Pet

THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

Published every Monday morning at nine o'clock.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 22, 1876.

The SATURDAY JOURNAL is sold by all Newsdealers in the United States and in the Canadian Dominion. Parties unable to obtain it from a newsdealer, or those preferring to have the paper sent direct, by mail, from the publication office, are supplied at the following rates:

Terms to Subscribers, Postage Prepaid:
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Sunshine Papers.

New York Thoughts.

NEW YORK is a large city. There is not a doubt about it. Why, the most consummate conceited Englishman that ever leveled his eye-glasses at "A native, aw!" From America, aw!" or blantly gloried that the sun never sets upon the British Dominions, would have to concede the fact that we may justly be proud of the population and extent of our metropolis. For we could confront him with figures, and you know the assertion has gone forth that "figgers can't lie!" Though, to be sure, you and I know that they can play very practical jokes sometimes, when manipulated by humorous fingers. But then, there is the census; a very honest authority—in intent. It is rather remarkable for the tricks it plays with ages; it is in every way reliable with its reports of numbers. Mrs. Flippins may take ten years off her number of years, but she will never take one child off of her number of children, however astounding the mention of them all, taken in connection with her innocent declaration of her youthfulness, may be. Which proves, most conclusively to my mind, two facts concerning woman. First: she is, instinctively, a snare, a falsity, and a delusion. Second: she is lacking in the perception of the eternal fitness of things.

But this is a digression. I only designed proving that we can confute any doubts that any ignorant mortal may advance damaging to the fame of the greatest city of the New World.

It is questionable whether we good Americans lack appreciate our own, *ownest* city. For there is no circumstance—English for "getting round"—the fact that familiarity breeds contempt. And a goodly portion of New Yorkers themselves entertain very tame opinions of their city, nor know, no more than strangers, of the much to be seen within its boundaries that is admirable.

And you whose homes are away in quiet towns and villages have very unreal perceptions of what New York is. Even if you visit it once or twice a year, you hardly can measure its extent, its rapid growth, its handsome buildings, its amazing corporations—though of these you are likely to know most, through the medium of those argus-eyed reporters of all that goes awry, the newspapers; and you must have heard that, for ways that are dark, and for tricks that are vain, New York corporations are peculiar—its points of interest, its teeming life.

Indeed, of the latter it would be impossible for any one to conceive who has not seen the city in all its phases of existence; in the heats of midsummer and the gayety of holiday times, the early mornings and the late nights, in its avenues and its alleys, and across and about and around town. And what an immense amount of this life pours into the city every morning, like a great tidal-river, and ebbs out of it again at night, through a hundred estuaries of ferrage and railway. The country must have charms! Think of people traveling fifty, sixty and seventy miles daily, to do business in town and live out of it!

And yet, there are many who do, to say nothing of the thousands who journey lesser distances. Speaking of the deductions concerning female character to be gained from the census reports, suggests one very funny characteristic of womankind always observable in the goings to and from town. I mean the predilection of women for carrying bundles. Odd, isn't it, that while men have a natural repulsion for trotting packages around, the dear ladies never can load themselves with too many? And yet, men regard vanity and extravagance as purely feminine feelings, when they are themselves the sex that will pay fifty cents expressage any time rather than carry a dozen oranges by hand. And still funnier is woman's absolute inability to do up a package respectably. I find an immense amount of amusement in watching the bundles that come on the boats and cars. You can always tell what hands, male or female, tied the strings. And then, when a woman will place in a package, to have another satisfying glance at her purchases, or to be sure the merchant did not swindle her out of half she bought—and women have a sad habit of so doing—I know there is fun in store. The way she pulls, and tucks, and doubles the paper! Then she looks at the string—and is conquered. Never, never, can she arrange it as it was. Probably she fails to make it go half around the bundle. She winds it, just as women have a trick of winding things in general, tightly around and around, and then is overcome with astonishment when it is suddenly missing, and shows up hanging to her cloak sleeve, or the tassel of

her muff, while the paper slides in one direction and the purchase in another. How lawyers briefs and governmental documents would look if trusted to a woman's fingers for their red-tape! And red-tape brings to mind wafers, and such postal flavorings suggest closing. I must postpone my search for a representative female bundle-tie, and my introduction of my readers to some of New York's representative daily journey-ists, until next week.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

AUNT POLLY.

WHEN Aunt Polly did I think she took a great deal of the world's sunlight with her, for Providence seemed to have bestowed on her a sunshiny disposition that no trial or suffering could interfere with. Aunt Polly was old, feeble, poor and a martyr to rheumatism, but, for all that, there seemed to be a sunbeam always dancing in her eye and a spirit of cheerfulness pervading her heart that few of us, more fortunate persons, are blessed with. Many people went to console with Aunt Polly on account of her troubles, but you couldn't console with her. Some one who had a very gloomy disposition and who had a habit of bemoaning over every real and imaginary evil, told Aunt Polly he did not see how she could sing when she had so much to contend with, but Aunt Polly believed that Providence had given her a voice to sing with and it would be wicked in her not to use the powers given her.

"It seems a mystery to me," continued Mr. Glum-gloomy, "that you can be cheerful under your sufferings and when you think of your trials."

"I don't think about them," answered Aunt Polly, with a beaming face; "I count the blessings and forget the trials. Sometimes things look dark and gloomy, and the rain will drip through the ceiling, but I know that a warm sun will soon dry it all up. Besides, it doesn't rain every day, and there are more sunny than rainy days in a year. The earth needs the showers, and I can't stop the water coming down by muttering, any more than I can stop my aches by groaning—it's a good deal less trouble to sing than to cry. There's a good deal of truth to the lines:

"Taking the world all round, my friends,
There isn't more night than day."

There's a deal of comfort in those lines. A great many persons thought Aunt Polly hadn't what could be called a "serious turn of mind" because she could not quote Scripture by the yard. She did what I think was much better—she acted up to the truths of Scripture, and quoted from it less. She could not give anything in charity, for she lived almost on charity herself. Everybody in the village called her "Aunt Polly," and no one was more loved than she.

She healed the breaches in many a family; and no one delighted more in saying kind words than she. Toilers have sought her for words of comfort, and have gone away feeling happier, better, and more contented with their lot in life—the turn in the long lane seemed nearer to them. The children missed her sunny face if they did not see it at the window, when they went to school, and would run in to see if Aunt Polly were sick. They loved her for her cheerful disposition, and she sang her song seemed to sound better if sung by her than by any one else.

The cottage was poor, yet we did all we could to keep it in order, and for everything we did we were well repaid for our work by receiving a pleasant "Thank you."

You might say as much ill of a person as you could think of but Aunt Polly would be sure to find out their virtues—the reason being that she looked for them while we did not. You couldn't make her believe that any one was all bad, because, she argued, no one was all good. The owner of the great house on the hill owned bank stocks and property, but I doubt if he were as happy as poor old Aunt Polly. I know he did not have her cheerful disposition and even his riches could not buy that.

Aunt Polly could not bear scandal, for she did not think it right for one human being to talk ill of another.

"If no one thought scandal, they wouldn't talk scandal, and if no one talked scandal there would be no mischief of that kind traveling around."

That was Aunt Polly's opinion of the matter, and I think it was the right one. Aunt Polly is dead, and sincere was the mourning expressed at our loss. We miss her in our troubles, and we often wonder how we are going to do without her. God bless her memory!

When I am inclined to grow heartless with reading the record of so much suffering and wickedness, and believe that the world could not be much worse, or its inhabitants more wicked, I seem to hear Aunt Polly's voice singing in my ear the beautiful and comforting lines:

"Oh, heaven is not so far away
Beyond our earthly boundary,
And the world is not so full of sin,
But angels pure may dwell within."

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Winter Notes.

Isn't it cold!
We are now knee-deep in winter, and it is about time to begin to inquire after the author of "Beautiful Snow." I'll bet he never went out in the yard and dug his wood out with his bare hands.

It is also time to go and get measured for a winter overcoat, and spend your leisure in wondering how in the world you are ever going to pay for it.

The best way to keep your nose warm this winter is to keep it in other people's affairs. One of the real blessings of cold weather is that you can wear a ragged coat under your overcoat and nobody can smile at your economy.

You can get a very good thoroughbred cold now, cheap, but it will cost you a good deal of money to keep it on hand.

It is a splendid time for somebody so invent readymade fires for morning purposes.

If you want to keep your head warm tie your ears up over it.

If you want to make it warm around your hearth during this cold weather, stay out late at night. Your wife will nurse her wrath to keep it warm enough for you.

If you want to enjoy yourself sit down on the front step, take off your straw hat, open your collar and fan yourself for an hour or so.

If you go down-street you need not wear slippers; common boots will slip just as well, as the season for sliding on your nose is at its greatest height.

Most people with hot temper can keep cool without very much exertion, with thermometer at 0.

The season for housewives to stand with sleeves rolled up, and talk across the fence about the neighbor on the right is about over.

The good-night kiss at the door is still in order, but not so long as it used to be; but it seems to have lost none of its sweetness.

There's a good deal in the wind now, and in it is frost, and the tall man gets more of it than the short man.

Blessed is the fat man, for it takes longer for him to get cold clear through.

Blessed is the lean man, for he can thaw out quick!

Linens duster, well lined and wadded, will make good overcoats this winter.

Coats will be worn longer now than they ever were before, because the times are harder.

One would think the wind blows hard enough to blow all the cold out of the weather, but it don't.

Lovers riding out, although they are wrapped up in each other's affection, will be mighty apt to take cold.

No matter how warmly you may talk out of doors, your friend will have reason to complain of cold words.

Separated lovers have a good deal of coldness between them.

If a man doubts there is frost in iron let him touch his tongue to it, he will have it at his tongue's end to doubt no more.

If any tramp sends in for alms send him a—away.

Think of you hereafter and shiver!

About the only thing I can find about winter to like is that fleas are not so much on the wing as they were.

This is about the coldest winter we have ever had, and I've seen hundreds of them in my travels.

Don't put your hands into other people's pockets to keep them warm—it may be made too warm for you.

Don't try to keep your feet warm by stamping them at your wife.

The frost bites you strike it with a club, or bite back, just as is most convenient.

Blessed is the poor man who has a fever this kind of weather!

Be sure you lay in a good supply of coal; nothing keeps a man so warm as to be well coalled.

The best thing, really, to lay in this winter is to lay in bed till the house gets warm.

Be careful how you talk on the street lest the words freeze in your throat and choke you to death. Of course you can use nothing but hard words.

It is a good time now to sit down and get up a perspiration by reading about digging canals in the Torrid Zone.

It is so cold that it takes preachers a good while to warm up in their discourses, but if sinners don't warm up now, they will after they depart.

But it isn't cold enough to freeze out peddlers yet.

It is very delightful to sit by a pleasant evening fire with your wash-bill paid, and the tailor put off till next week, and crack jokes and hickory nuts, and think of the hungry who have no clothes, and the freezing who have nothing to eat. I say it is delightful.

Calves out in this weather should be well foddered and mothered.

If you are going down town, you can warm your blood by running; if the sheriff is after you, you can regulate your speed accordingly; but you can't warm up by running into debt.

Don't run as hard as that.

When your boots give way from pure inability, this is the golden time for your shoemaker to say you burned them.

Now is the time to try and persuade your wife that surely next winter you will be able to get a new set of furs—the very finest in town, if she will only wait. See that she don't get in a muff.

If it is so cold that you have to boil your thermometers to tell the exact temperature, take thirteen of them; if one don't tell the truth, the others will.

I slept so cold last night that I was afraid to move for fear I would break all up into little bits of pieces.

Scientific men say this cold weather is seventy-five miles thick at the present time.

Some rivers out West are frozen to the bottom, and it would be a good thing to pry them out and leave a dry bed.

In Canada, the people all freeze up in the winter. When they want to see one of them they take him to a warm stove, warm him until he comes to, transact what business they wish, and then stand him back in the corner again.

If it wasn't for some notes of mine falling due in May, I would most devoutly wish it was spring.

Please stir up the fire a little,
Yours coldly,
WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Topics of the Time.

Germany, with a population of 42,000,000, last year graduated six hundred and sixty physicians, rejecting one hundred and eighty applicants. In the same time the United States, with a population of 40,000,000, graduated three thousand and physicians and remorselessly turned them loose on the community. If a few of our so-called "medical colleges" could be subjected to the scalpel and another dozen laid out for dissection, and the residue held responsible for the men they add with the issue of life and death, the country would be healthier, wealthier, and happier. A surplus of crudely qualified physicians is far more to be dreaded and deprecated than a surplus of lawyers—which is an affliction and scourge that only a republic can survive.

How nearly is life allied to life? Does the reader realize that an infant, deprived of Heaven's free light will only grow into a shapeless idiot instead of a beautiful and reasonable being? Hence, in the deep, dark gorges of the Swiss Valais, where the direct sunshine never reaches, the hideous prevalence of idiocy startles the traveler. It is a strange, melancholy idiosyncrasy. Many persons are incapable of articulate speech; some are deaf, some are blind, some labor under all these privations, and all are misshapen in almost every part of the body. What an impressive lesson does that teach! God's sweet sunlight is food for the mind. No room should be deprived of its beneficent presence. No house should be so overshadowed by hill or tree as to be deprived of a full play of the sun's rays above and around and through it. He who is unwise enough to despise this injunction may be classed with fools who shall be punished according to their folly.

Narcisse Plochard is a hairdresser in Paris, but he is also an amateur portrait painter. As he only charges twenty francs a portrait, he has a great many orders among the humbler classes. Recently he was called upon to paint the portrait of Madame Beaulogis, a buxom janitress. She was painted in professional posture, seated with one hand on the cord and the other resting upon the back of her pet cat, a handsome Angora, which reposed in her lap. The portrait was excellent, the Angora being particularly good, as the painter's name was known to the hair was of advantage. But after the first compliments, the scene changed. Madame Beaulogis drew a louis d'or from her purse and handed it to the artist. He pocketed it and asked, "Where is the other?" "What other?" said the surprised janitress. "The other louis; your portrait is forty francs." "But you told me it would be twenty francs." "By the head. There were two heads—yours and that of your cat." "But the cat is an ornament, a more accessory like the cord. Do you want me to pay for the rope, too?" "The cord doesn't count, but the cat counts; that is a head. I count by heads. Will you give me the other louis?" "No." "Well, then I'll take away the picture!" and he did so. Madame Beaulogis seeks to repel it. Narcisse in return demands his two louis d'or, and the Paris District Court will soon have to decide this weighty lawsuit.

Private reading clubs, composed equally of ladies and gentlemen, meeting every week at the house of one of the lady members and winding up each reading with a dance, are coming into great favor. It is one of the pleasing signs of the times—this commingling of the intellectual with our social recreations. Spelling-matches did very much to disseminate a knowledge of our language—to make people familiar with words and their uses; and now, if we superadd reading, we have a new incentive to intelligence. Let our young folks profit by this suggestion in the organization of their winter gatherings.

The fresh discoveries of gold and silver in the "Panama" country of California bids fair to add enormously to our coming product of the "precious metals," but, strangely enough, for every such find in this country, Australia seems to "go us one better." We now hear that the most important discovery ever made in connection with gold mining in that colony, with the exception of the original discovery of gold in 1851, occurred on the 11th of September in the shaft of the Magdalena Company, at Pleasant Creek—or of a gold-bearing quartz reef at the unprecedented depth of 1,081 feet, or about seven hundred feet further into the interior of the earth than gold has ever yet been obtained in Victoria. The thickness of the "reef" is now known to exceed ten feet, and the percentage exceedingly rich. The directors of the company have decided to break off a good-sized block of the stone and send it to the Philadelphia Exhibition, with a sectional drawing of the shaft and the different strata passed through. There can be but one result to the heavy yearly accession to the gold and silver product of the world—the depreciation of the value of these minerals.

—May I sit here, madam?" inquired a spruce-looking young man of an elderly woman, on the cars between Chicago and Milwaukee, the other day, pointing to the vacant seat by her side. "Wal, I s'pose so," replied the old lady, reluctantly; "but look, here, young man," she continued, "I know you ye are—ye're one of them 'sidin' drummers, but ye might as well know that I ain't goin' to have any of yer wakin' and blinkin' and love-makin' round me!" And she emphasized her remark by a vigorous crash of her umbrella on the arm of the seat. The young man concluded to sit on the wood-box by the stove.

How nearly comparative or local are our ideas of beauty! Our American "style" is as foreign to the ideas of a Hollander, for instance, as is the Esquimaux style to us. The Dutchman's belle is a woman of thick waist, thick limbs, and thick flesh, as evidenced in all Reuben pictures. His beauties all are heavy weights, even his angels are of strong avoirdupoise. A noted writer, speaking of this, declares that he would take less paint in representing an entire American belle than would Reubens in painting his beau ideal of a female arm. Our ideas are largely grounded on the Greek and Roman; hence the popularity of the antique statues. While the African thinks thick lips and much wool the prerequisites of personal beauty the Greek thinks their absence distinguishing the mark of intellect and refinement. And the modern right, unquestionably. Thick lips denote a coarse or voluptuous nature, while the thin lips, transparent nostrils, prominent, clear cut nose and well-defined but light eyebrows indicate the person of strong but refined nature.

A recent advertisement contains the following startling information: "If the gentleman who keeps a shoe store with a red head will handle the slate-roofed grocer's shop, he will hear of something to his advantage, as the same is the gift of a deceased mother, now no more, with the name engraved upon it." The man who would keep an umbrella after such an appeal for forebearance, to say the least, is a creature upon a slighter provocation.

—Dr. William B. Davis read a paper before the Cincinnati Medical Society, at a recent meeting, giving observations on vaccination during the present epidemic in Cincinnati. His observations, he said, were based on two hundred private cases and six hundred cases of vaccination in the workhouse. His conclusions were as follows:

1. That exposure to infection and intense epidemic influence largely increases the susceptibility of the system to the influence of vaccine virus, and accounts for the unusual number of successful vaccinations during the existence of an epidemic.

2. Small-pox and varioloid give no more immunity from a recurrence of small-pox than vaccination.

3. The cicatrix (or mark) is not a safe criterion of the degree of protection given by the previous vaccination. A number of persons were vaccinated having pits of small-pox on their persons, and seventy-five per cent. of the cases lost.

4. It is advisable to vaccinate upon every exposure to contagion, unless it has been recently done with success.

5. Those who are successfully vaccinated were to some extent susceptible to the small-pox influence.

—Speaking of the approaching auction sale of articles which have accumulated in the Dead Letter Office since 1869, the Washington Star says: "In all cases where letters and packages contain valuables they are returned to the writer or forwarded if there is any clue to his address, and when none can be found they are of course retained in the Dead Letter Office. The money alone which yearly finds its way into this office ranges from \$75,000 to \$100,000. During the last fiscal year the amount received was \$77,106.56, of which \$54,537.17 was returned to the forwarders, and \$22,739.49 remained in the hands of the department June 30, 1875. Some idea of the articles accumulated may be gained when it is stated that the list embraces 2,219 miscellaneous articles (including wearing apparel of all kinds), 1,375 pieces of jewelry, some very valuable; 1,506 books, treating on almost every subject; two hundred and sixty-nine chromos, two hundred and seventeen pieces of sheet music, one hundred and two stereoscopic views, and almost everything else, from an organ bellows to the blacksmith's vice. No wonder our Post Office Department objects to the use of the mail facilities as a common carrier. The mail really ought to carry only written, printed, or engraved matter.

—The celebrated English physician, Dr. Wilks, is rather severe on those who keep eternally complaining of overwork. What he says is good for "general consumption" that we repeat from a late number of the *Lancet* his view. "My own opinion," he says, "has already been expressed, that the evils attending it on the community at large are vastly overestimated; and, judging from my own experience, the persons with unstrung nerves who apply to the doctor are not the prime-minister, the bishops, judges, and hard-working professional men, but merchants and stock-brokers retired from business, government clerks who work from ten to four, women whose domestic duties and bad servants are driving them to the grave, young ladies whose visits to the village school or Sunday performance on the organ are undermining their health, and so on. In short, in my experience I see more ailments arise from want of occupation than from overwork, and taking the various kinds of nervous and dyspeptic ailments which we are constantly treating, I find at least six due to idleness to one from overwork." "That's what's the matter," Laziness can't come in for first honors just now.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unpublishable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosures, for such return.—No correspondence on any subject is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy."—Third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet.—One Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Accepted: "The River's Story;" "Love, the Glorifier;" "A Dangerous Experiment;" "The Elizabeth and Jane;" "How She Proposed;" "Bartered;" "Too Late;" "Song;" "The Phantom Train;" "The Right of Search."

Declined: "The Story of an Old Mill;" "My Christmas Story;" "Steamship and Courtship;" "Rhoda's Rascal;" "New Years' Calls;" "Dead to Me;" "A Wait;" "Watching for the Santa Claus;" "The Everglade Scout;" "The Man with Two Faces."

Ed. N. K. We never have published "sheet music."

Boy Sport. A very fair rifle can be had for \$35. Old Reader. Cannot supply the papers.

Das E. The lady named is a resident of New Jersey and is not a widow.

Miss Braden. A real seal-skin jacket costs from sixty to eighty dollars. Some much more.

SANDTOWN CHAP. Government land is entered, under the Homestead Law, free, under certain conditions.

MAJOR BAGGAGE. Colonel Baker, of the English army, was merely dismissed, by order of the queen—he was not "cashiered."

Zeno the last. Men are, on the average, larger now than they were in the days of the ancients, and the average of human life is increased about one-fourth over the average of a few hundred years ago.

BYRON JIM. The alligator is a purely American beast—is found nowhere else but in our Southern waters. The saurian of the South American continent is the cayman; of the old world, the crocodile. Each of these has essential differences.

H. C. D. Percy B. St. John, like Capt. Mayo Reid, is an Englishman.—Thank you for your excellent opinion of the JOURNAL. You think, as a great many other good judges do—that its serials are unequalled.

S. H. D. Gardiner. Violins are made of numerous woods—pine, maple, spruce, beach, etc. The old instruments made by the great makers, at Cremona, had the neck, back and sides of rosewood, and the belly of spruce-pine. These violins now bring extraordinary prices—from \$300 to \$300 each.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, ALBANY, N. Y. Certainly, you have a perfect right to any special course you may select. To go through the old "college course" and neglect proficiency in branches you must use, is worse than folly, and a waste of your studies as a manufacturer selects his material—that most wanted first: ornaments afterward.

SOUTH SEVENTH STREET. Can't answer your first question.—One of our (3,000) two-branched, gold and silver contains 29,192 tiny ounces, and, therefore, the value of a ton of pure gold is \$922,739.21, and of a ton of silver, \$37,704.45.—See item elsewhere about the gold products of the world.

LADY ELLEN. Physiologists have laid these rules down about the chin: A narrow, square chin indicates a desire to love, and is more common among women. The heart-shaped chin indicates violent love, or at least devoted attachment. The broad, round chin indicates ardent love, combined with great steadiness and permanence of affection. The retreating chin is indicative of the want of attachment, and but little ardor in love. The chin, in its length, indicates self-control, self-will, resolution and decision.

MAMMA, ROCHESTER, asks how to arrange little girls' hair fashionably; and what can be done to improve the quantity and color of thin, colorless hair of children. The hair should be kept as short as possible, and the scalp should be kept healthy by weekly washing it in a quart of tepid water, to which two teaspoonfuls of ammonia is added.

Brush well, daily. If the hair is turned red, red and glossy by good care, its color will never be objectionable, though low-colored locks should be exposed frequently to the sun, and the hair commences to grow, till the ends once a month.

ROSE FLORAY, Babylon, L. I., asks: "If a lady is visiting a friend, and the latter, out of politeness, offers to escort them home, and the visitor does not like the gentleman, is she obliged to walk home with him, simply on the strength of her friend's acceptance? Or, should she not, in such a case, suit her before accepting the gentleman's company?"

Politeness would require you to accompany your hostess, when she has accepted of your escort in behalf of both, unless some other gentleman had already put himself at your service. There is no reason why the lady should not accept of the gentleman's offer, if she is not personally acquainted with him, and if she declines the service for any little personal caprice. If you knew him to be a man not fit for you to associate with, you could then firmly refuse his company.

J. S. W. says: "I love a young lady, and we both are at college. Now I think she likes another young gentleman, and I fear to address her on that account; besides, we are all allowed to have a little fun. What advice would you give me?" We would advise you, if you are a young man of sterling sense and strong will, to tell her of your feelings, and to gain all the book-knowledge you can during this favored period of your life. Knowledge of human nature, as learned from the study of the sciences, from conducive to devotion to the gaining of other instruction. We know nothing whatever of the firm which you make mention of.

Mrs. C. H. W. writes: "My husband is a music-teacher, and is frequently not home until very late at night. We are not rich enough to keep a servant, and I have to get up early breakfast for my children, who attend school, and go to bed early. My husband will not get up till his breakfast until nearly noon, and then insists upon a dinner being prepared at his private expense the evening after the children are in bed. I insist that this is too much drudgery, but what can I do?"

HAUNTED.

BY EREN E. REXFORD.

How still the night is! hear the breeze
Make mournful music in the trees.
I hear the sad-voiced, autumn rain
Sob fiercely at the window-pane,
And all about the silent room
Grim shadows gather in the gloom.

Look in that corner? Do you see
A wan, white face that looks at me?
A haunting face, with eyes that glow
As if some bale-fire burned below!
A face that jeers me, till I hide
My eyes, and turn my face aside!

You cannot see it? Strange indeed!
It laughs and mocks, and when I plead
In tears for it to go away,
It smiles in triumph, and will stay
To haunt me ever. See it smile!
To hear me talk to you the while!

Go hence! oh, ghost of love that died,
With flowers as frail at summertime!
What use to haunt my heart to-day
With memories of a vanished May?
Love was not for me. Let me be.
The dead are always dead to me.

Are always dead? I did forget
That some things live in long regret.
We strive to hide them under mold
Beneath a marble slab, so cold
As human hearts are; still they live
And haunt us, while we cry for give!

Oh, ghostly shape, this mournful night
Go hence forever from my sight.
I thrust you from me in my pride.
Love drooped and pined, I thought it died.
Get back into the grave, I pray,
And haunt no more my lonely way.

Vials of Wrath:

OR,

THE GRAVE BETWEEN THEM.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "TWO GIRLS' LIVES," "LOVE-
BLIND," "OATH-BOUND," "BARBARA'S
FATE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

A LEADING HAND.

TRUE to her brave determination, Ethel Havelstock had made her own arrangements to leave her home, once so happy, now so desolate, at once, and the afternoon of the day that saw her husband dancing attendance upon Ida Wynne, amid the elegant retirement of Tanglewood, witnessed her lonely departure from the little cottage in Harlem. The expressman had come for her trunk, and received his orders to allow it to remain in the office until sent for; the windows had all been carefully closed, and the last sobbing farewell had been taken; and then Ethel walked out the front door and locked it after her.

She did not glance back once, or even look to see if any of her strange neighbors were watching her away. If they did she never knew it, or that perhaps some of them gave her a sneering glance and curled thin lips to see her and her trunks leaving the house whose handsome master had gone some time before.

Or if any eyes looked kindly, pityingly after her young, black-robed form, and wondered who or what their sweet-faced, ladylike, reserved neighbor was—she never knew.

And it did not matter. Sympathy and sneers were alike unavailable to lift the heavy burden from her young life; alike powerless to alter the entire friendlessness that crushed her so as she walked along the busy streets.

Not a roof in all the whole world to which she might flee for even one night's shelter; not a woman friend to go to, to whom she might unobscure herself, and on whose affection rely. No one—one none between her and the hard, bitter, relentless world.

The thoughts were brooding darkly over her as she went slowly on; she felt her eyes growing hot and staring; her steps lagging and spiritless, her very heart sinking with some awful nervous foreboding that naturally frightened her, brave, noble as she was.

"This will not do. My brief dream is over, and sighing and bemoaning will never recall it. Frank is dead, and there is only one way left for me. I must work for my own support at whatever I can find to do. Let me begin by exorcising these demons of despair and regret whose influences are so baleful. I will not succumb to them."

She said it to herself, almost defiantly, and clenched her hands tightly as if to give power to her brave endeavor. She compelled herself to step along more quickly, less spiritlessly, and with a prayer in her heart for courage, and assistance and comfort, went more cheerfully on.

It was only a pleasantly long distance to the office of the real estate agent, to whom she delivered the key of the house, realizing as she turned to leave the place, that she had severed the very last tie that bound her to the past.

She felt the same old, unendurable agony rising up as the thought took rise, but she determinedly crushed it down, almost obstinately vowing she would not permit herself to dwell ever again upon what, while inevitable, could not fail of making her miserable. Then commenced her first real battle with the world; and, armed only with her womanly sweetness, her high-bred, dainty reserve, her courage and decision, she set forth alone, on foot, with a column of the New York Herald in her hand, to hunt for work, a home, and food.

It was heart-wearying—that afternoon's work, when Ethel rung bell and bell, to learn the "place" had been filled before nine o'clock that morning; when she was obliged to endure interviews whose rude curiosity was only equalled by contemptuous dismissal on account of her astounding ignorance on matters considered vitally important—such as proficiency in the noble arts of wax-work, hair-dressing, satin-embroidering, or lace mending.

It was just before sunset when Ethel turned discouragingly away from an imposing brown stone front, whose address was about half-way down her list. She dropped her valise as she descended the steps of the high stoop, and turned toward a quiet side street, leading into Union Square, where she had caught sight of a sign announcing a restaurant for ladies. She was not hungry, but weak from fasting and nervous exhaustion, and she knew she must eat, or become ill.

She quietly entered, and sat down at one of the tables and gave her simple order for a cup of tea and bread and butter—very simple and frugal, but the most she dare afford until something more substantial than the little roll of money in her pocket-book stood between her and the world.

There was no one in the saloon but herself, and she was very glad of it. She removed her little black kid gloves, and then her hair off her face—so fair, and spirited, with her great, wood-brown eyes, and her vivid red lips, whose expression was one of such wistfulness.

She was a lady, every inch, and even the flippant waiting-girls, used to every class of society, subdued into respectful attention de-

spite the trifling order she gave, that, when it came, she ate with a graceful ease that was refinement itself.

Her frugal lunch disposed of, she was drawing on her gloves over her white hands, when a shadow as of one standing in the doorway, fell darkly over her. She raised her eyes casually and saw, looking at her with all the greatness and goodness of his soul kindling in his face and eyes, Leslie Verne!

Like a glimpse of sunshine in the gloom of a dungeon, was the sudden, grateful joy his presence brought her. She sprang almost eagerly from her seat, her hands extended.

"Oh, Leslie!"

Her greeting was a pitiful commingling of welcome, of sharp remembrance, of wailing pain, of beseeching pity—and in her face and in her eyes, the young man read that something had happened—something terrible to this young girl he loved so dearly. He took her hands in his firm grasp and reassured her, drawing a chair to the same table.

"Ethel, what can be the matter? Your—your husband—"

He hesitated and winced at the word that his lips formed.

"Oh, Leslie—I am all alone now. He is dead!"

Her piteous, simple complaint touched his very heart core; a simple, solemn look spread over his bright, handsome face.

"Dead! my poor little girl! my poor little girl!"

His voice was inexpressibly tender, and his splendid blue eyes seemed almost caressing in their glances on Ethel's black-robed figure.

"Tell me, Ethel, all about it. Remember, I am your friend."

She thanked him from the depths of her heart for that, although her eyes only said so.

"There is so little to tell, Leslie, but it is so hard to bear. He was drowned, bathing—and he is buried in Greenwood. That is all."

She lifted her white, pain-sharpened face to his, looking at him with such eager, pitiful eyes that it almost unmanned him. Ethel, whom he worshiped so madly, breaking her heart for another, who was dead!

"I am sorry for you, Ethel," he said, simply. And he was, to know she suffered so deeply, and as he watched her in her fair, lovely beauty, so lone, so lone, it seemed to him if he only dared take her in his strong arms, and cradle her there forever, he would ask no higher boon on earth. It was hard for him—that ardent, eager lover, who loved Ethel with an intensity before which Frank Havelstock's regard was as the flicker of a rushlight against the blazing midday sun—almost unendurable to be obliged to sit there and to listen to her sorrow, and to know she had no thought for him more than on the day she refused his love for the man who now was dead.

Yet there was a wild elation of soul at the idea that Ethel was free again—free to be wooed and won when time should have healed her sorrow, although such thoughts were entirely premature at present. But in his great love, he vowed that Ethel should have him for the truest friend, the dearest brother that woman ever had. While he lived the world should use her very gently; and then—then—perhaps in time to come—The precious hope that bloomed in his big heart of some such future as he had dreamed of before, when Ethel should be his bride, and Meadowbrook their home, never faded from that moment.

"But, what shall you do, Ethel? I know you will never return to Mrs. Lawrence's."

"Never! Her house can never be my home again! But you know I am young, and strong, and able to work my way. Besides, Leslie, I seem to have new, fresh courage since I have so providentially met you. I feel I am no longer utterly friendless."

Her dark eyes were full of trust and gratitude as she looked at him, and young Verne smiled joyously in the fullness of happiness that Ethel trusted him, that Ethel depended on him, even for so little.

"Thank you," he returned, simply; "our meeting was ordered by Providence, I believe, and I am glad to know I can serve you in any way."

"I have been looking all the afternoon for employment, but found none as yet; I hope to be more successful to-morrow."

"But if not—"

A gloom gathered over her sweet face for a moment; then she smiled bravely.

"Then I will try again. Surely, in all New York, there is something for me to do."

"Poor child! poor innocent child!"

His love and pity were too deep for other words, as he looked at her, so nobly and bravely defying fate.

"Can you not advise me, Leslie? I will do as you say, if you think my plans are infeasible."

Her childish trust in him was exquisitely sweet, and he felt his face flushing under her frank gaze.

He suddenly reached his hands across the table to her, and took her own in them.

"Ethel, you may trust me—none the less that you are the dearest one on earth to me this moment, even as you were the day you so kindly refused my love. I will not wound you by another hint of that, or take unfair advantage of your position to renew my suit. I will only swear to you that I will be your dear friend, your older brother, on whom you may rely with the most implicit confidence. Ethel, friend, sister, will you agree to the compact?"

She lifted her eyes, all alight with thankfulness, and infinite trust, to his eager face.

"I accept your kindness, Leslie; and God will reward you for your help and comfort to me in my great distress."

A second's solemn silence followed, then Verne arose from his seat.

"You had better go now, Ethel, and we will walk through the Square, just below here, while we arrange a little business affair that has occurred to me."

Ethel took up her check, that Leslie had not offered to touch, and paid its value.

Then, side by side, the two went leisurely down the thronged street, into a quieter block, and then into the leafy, pleasant square where dozens of people were enjoying the walks, the seats, the fountain.

"I have not told you how doubly Providential our meeting was, Ethel. What will you think when I tell you I only came to the city this morning and shall return to Meadowbrook by the evening boat? You might have chosen a hundred other days for your sad task, and not have seen me."

He looked so tenderly down on the slight figure on his arm, so graceful, so ladylike.

"Yes," she answered, almost reverentially, "I think God arranged it for me; and I know He will not desert me after He has permitted me to receive such a blow."

"You are so good, Ethel—teach me to be, won't you?"

For answer, a faint, deprecating smile fluttered around her mouth—the very first since her sorrow. Brief as it was, it lighted Verne's pathway as if with liquid gold.

"But, to the 'business affair,' Ethel. My whole, sole and chief errand in New York to-day was to visit my aunt, Mrs. Argelyne—my dear dead mother's sister. I had not seen her since her return from a seven years' tour through Europe and the Holy Land, and ran down to-day in obedience to a telegram announcing her safe return several days ago. She lives on Fifth Avenue, in the house where my mother died."

There was a sadness in his voice, for which Ethel felt a sympathy; she pressed his arm softly to mutely express it, and although the gentle contact thrilled him to the very soul, he did not manifest his feelings.

"You wonder what all this has to do with you, Ethel? Shall I tell you?"

She assented, wondering.

"Just this. I found Mrs. Argelyne almost inconsolable over the loss of her friend and companion, a young lady, whose name I did not charge my memory with. My aunt declares there never will occur another to fill the vacant place—a position only a lady could fill, and of whom only pleasant, congenial duties would be expected in turn for a delightful home, sympathy, and my aunt's large affection. Does Ethel know of any one who can console Mrs. Argelyne?"

The tears rushed to her eyes in the depth of her gratitude.

"Oh, Leslie! if it could only be, I never would be able to repay you. Do you think she would be suited with me? Oh, I would try so hard to please her—and you, too, Leslie."

Her frank, girlish eagerness was charming; and Verne laughed, joyously.

"I will vouch for your adaptability, and her satisfaction. Shall I call a carriage and take you to at once? I would go home to Meadowbrook a happy man if I knew you slept under my aunt's roof to-night."

His earnest care for her welfare was so sweet to her; she felt rested in body and soul as she had not been for so many weary days.

"I will go at once, Leslie. She can only say no; and I would rather know at once."

Verne smiled, assuringly.

"She will not say 'no.' I want you to tell her your whole history—will you?"

Without waiting for a literal answer, Verne hailed a passing coupe, and gave the coachman the order:

"No.—Fifth avenue."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER'S WORK.

AFTER GEORGIA left the library Lexington also went out into the fresh, cool afternoon air, that seemed especially grateful to him after his fevered interview.

His wife's words haunted him strangely—"I confess or deny nothing." What did they mean? Did they intend to cover the guilt she was brave enough to admit, thus tacitly, by non-denial, or did she mean to taunt him with her indifference? Whichever way she intended, she had certainly succeeded in making Lexington more angry and jealous than ever, and as he descended the steps and strolled out among the flower-bordered walks, it was with a revengeful determination to find out who this secret lover of Georgia's was, who was so much more successful than he in winning her affections.

He walked on, with his head drooped on his breast, indulging in his gloomiest reflections, almost wishing he were back again among the jungles and deserts of Africa he had left only to satisfy the cravings of a nature that refused to be satisfied with anything else than the affection which Georgia could bestow upon him.

Her first refusal to receive him in his penitent tenderness was a sharp blow upon which he had not counted; but he had imputed it to her impulses, that he knew were strong, and, away down in his heart, forgave her even while his manhood's pride still bled under the wound she had dealt with unsparing hand.

But this last revelation—this accusation that Havelstock was so loath to make, on account of his earnest friendship—this charge so terrible that was true, partly on the strength of the informant who would never have made it had he not been infallibly aware of its pitiful positiveness; partly, and still more credibly, by reason of his wife's singular conduct when he had first accused, and then, in the greatness of his love, given her a loop-hole of escape that she utterly ignored—of course, because she preferred her lover to her husband.

They were not pleasant reflections that filled his mind; he walked mechanically, and further and further from the house, into a stillness and loneliness that was infinitely restful to him, and from which calming influence he was angrily startled by the appearance of a small boy, evidently no stranger in the grounds, judging by the easy speed of his gait, and the direct paths he chose in order to reach the entrance of the house.

Lexington eyed him sharply—suspiciously.

"Well, what do you want? These are private grounds, inside which no strangers have any business."

His curt tones had its effect on the youngster; he instantly fell back, attempting an awkward bow, but never making an effort to retract his steps, and, it seemed to Lexington, glancing with anxious scrutiny to the house.

"Who do you want? Have you any message for any one at Tanglewood? If so, I will deliver it."

His keen eyes evidently intimidated the boy, who stammered and hesitated in his answers.

"It isn't no message, nor nothin'!" and then paused, stubbornly digging his toes into the loose gravel walk.

"Then clear out whichever way you came! And in the future, if you have business at Tanglewood, come in at the servants' entrance. Don't let me find you prowling about my yards an—"

He stopped suddenly, as if paralysis had seized his tongue, for from the crown of the boy's loose straw hat there slipped down a narrow piece of paper, that fluttered to the ground, one side of which was covered with pencil writing.

A dark flush shot over the boy's face as he saw it, and he instinctively made a dive for it; but Lexington was quicker than he, and as he grasped it without a word, the boy took to his heels in terror, evidently having been previously impressed with the necessity of keeping Mr. Lexington in ignorance of his errand.

Lexington read the message, standing like a statue; a message to Georgia, his wife, from Carleton Vance, begging her to meet him at the time and place of the last interview, that same evening.

There was no name subscribed by which Lexington might know that his supposed unknown rival was his wife's first husband; and he laughed, bitterly to himself as he thought the handwriting was sufficiently well known to Georgia that no name was needed to tell her who wanted her at the "same time and place."

"So her lover has appointed another interview at the summerhouse, where Frank saw them. And she will go—this fair, false wo-

man, who is at once my curse and happiness—this wife—ha! ha!—this beautiful wife of mine, on whose honor I would have staked my soul's eternal welfare."

He crushed the paper in his hands with a force he would have used had its writer been in his power instead; then he resumed his walk, with wild, restless eyes, and nervous, uncertain steps.

"She would neither deny or confess, eh? and yet, at the very moment when she assumed her high-tragedy airs of an innocence beyond reproach, she was expecting this appointment—on her way to the grounds, in all probability, to receive personally what I have so unluckily intercepted."

He fairly gnashed his teeth in the awful fury of his blazing jealousy—this man who worshipped the ground his wife spurned with her foot.

"Shall I give it to her with my own hands, and see her writhe under the tortures of her discovered secret? Or, shall I meet him—curse him!—myself, when he comes to take her in his arms and receive the kisses she chooses to withhold from me? Shall I let them meet in their pretended secrecy, and then beard them with their disgrace, and strike them dead at my feet?"

He was fairly beside himself in his mad passion; his eyes were bloodshot, and glared fiercely at the offensive paper in his hot, trembling hands.

"Somehow, I cannot realize it, even with this damning evidence in my possession. How can it be possible that Georgia, my Georgia, is so false—so false! I have worshiped her, as men do their God, and even when icest coldness or stubborn pride has intervened between us, I have always had for my one anchor the blessed thought that the time would come when she would love me, by sheer force of my own undying love for her. But now—now—I would give ten years off my miserable life if I could only despise her as she deserves; if I could only root out this deathless passion for her that I feel over and above the anguish her perfidy gives me."

His footsteps became slower and slower, until at last he sunk down on the grassy sward, almost feebly; he covered his haggard face with his hands, shutting out the mocking brightness of the sunlight.

It was the very spot where Frank Havelstock, the man Lexington loved and trusted implicitly, had thrown himself in such a transport of passion the night he had resolved to secure Ida Wynne and part of Tanglewood; but Lexington could not know of that circumstance, and the mute ground told no secrets; nor did the soft, low summer sounds whisper what they knew.

It was nearly the dinner hour when Lexington returned to the house. He went up the flight of marble steps and entered the hall, passing directly up the grand staircase to his own private rooms.

He did not as much as glance toward Georgia's sitting-room door, which, directly opposite his, stood ajar; he was too bitterly angry, too thoroughly outraged in every feeling of his nature to vouchsafe a sign of her existence, by merely admitting that he remembered her private apartments were there.

He passed through the door of his sitting-room, and closed it after him, deposited his hat on the marble table, and then, halted suddenly in extremest surprise.

For there, at his desk, in an attitude of deepest despair, with her head buried in her folded arms, her whole figure convulsed with the heart-rending sobs that shook her severely, was his wife.

"This is an unwarrantable intrusion. May I ask to what I am indebted for the rare pleasure of your company?"

His voice fairly stung her; she sprang from her crouching attitude, with her pale, tear-stained face toward him, her beseeching eyes fairly wild with anguish.

"Don't—don't! Oh, Theodore, I have come to tell you all—all—I—"

He interrupted her with a sneer.

"Indeed! Allow me to forestall any confessions and playing upon my weaknesses, by informing you that I am aware of what you would say—I know all!"

He was watching her keenly as he spoke; his voice harsh, yet husky with some powerful emotion. She was so fair, if false; so wicked, and yet—he loved her madly!

She started slightly at his positive language; then a ray of hope radiated on her face.

She clasped her beautiful hands across her breast in humblest imploration, and stepped so near him he might have counted her heart-beats.

"You know all, Theodore! and you will forgive me! forgive me for the innocent cheat I practiced upon you; forgive me that I did not tell you sooner!"

She made her plea, then waited for the answer, hope and fear agonizing on her sweet face.

He made no answer beyond a grim, steady stare at her, while his fingers clutched the fateful note of which she had no knowledge.

"I know I have been wicked, Theo—proud, and obstinate, and haughty. I have been unwilfully in my repellant anger, unjust in my cruel thoughts. But I have loved you through it all—I always have loved you with all my heart, and soul, and strength! Even to-day, when I said those awfully cruel words, I loved you more than ever! Theo! Theo! take me back!"

She fell on her knees before him, at his very feet; her arms clinging around his knees, her upturned face eloquent with earnestness, her eyes darkly passionate—waiting for the answer that came, like a knell of doom.

Slowly he brought his hands from behind him—that the note fairly scorched as Georgia knelt before him; that made his rage and anger burn the hotter as he thought how she was daring to confess and beg his favor in the same breath.

"Georgia, such a tirade is useless. Get up, and I will answer you, false, cruel, vile, though—"

She was on her feet in a second, a wild, moaning cry on her pale lips.

"Theo—no—no! Unsay—"

He interrupted her with a move of his hands.

"Listen, madam. I say I know all. Your stolen interview, your secret lover, your subsequent agitation—everything, everything! You stand before me, this minute, a fair, beautiful woman, but stripped of the mask you have worn, and appearing as you are—a wife false to her marriage vows."

A scream of terrible anguish burst from her lips; she reached her hand toward him, in a piteous gesture, but he curled his lips and stepped further away.

"I do not admire amateur theatrical performances, so please spare me. Perhaps this will serve to compose your thoughts."

He thrust the note in her hands, with an expression of fierce gloom on his face.

She took it mechanically, and read it; a slow scarlet flush staining her cheek.

"Well, shall you go?"

She stared at him in stolid amazement, her hands and the paper falling limply to her sides.

"I ask, shall you meet this lover of yours, or will you, thinking to hoodwink me further, pretend to be indignant, and allow him to miss his chance while you remain at home to prove your charming innocence?"

Georgia dashed the paper to the floor in a transport of emotion.

"Listen, for God's sake! if you only knew how I fear, hate him—if—"

"You can not impose upon me by such flimsy excuses. Women never 'fear and hate' men whom they consent to see as you have this one. Save yourself further repentance by adding no more falsehood to your long catalogue of sins."

He made an elaborate bow, and passed into his dressing-room, closing and locking the door after him.

The silent insult was enough for Georgia; she turned quickly around, a low, heartrending moan on her quivering lips, and went from the room to her own.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 298.)

Pacific Pete,
The Prince of the Revolver.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "OLD BULL'S-EYE," "YELLOW-
STONE JACK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A MASTER STROKE.

THAT word decided Mark. His veins seemed filled with fire, and a deadly light shone in his eyes as he sprang forward. Upon that moment hung the lives of more than one of the party. Though surprised, the two outlaws could easily have protracted the struggle until assistance could arrive from the cavern, when Old Business and Mark must flee for life or die fighting. In any case this carefully laid plan would be frustrated.

With a grating curse the trailer sprang up and clutched Austin by the throat, bearing him back to the ground with as much ease, apparently, as though dealing with a child, and held him motionless behind the screen of bushes. All this could not be done without more or less noise being made, and the two outlaws glanced quickly back. But nothing suspicious met their eyes, and once more they pushed on, over the ridge.

"Look here, boy," said Old Business, in a low, grating whisper; "you make another move like that and we part company. I thought you had some sense!"

"You said that was the man who murdered father," gasped Mark, fingering his throat, where were plainly to be seen the five livid prints of the trailer's fingers.

"So he did—one of them. But it's not now that he must pay the forfeit. There's the girl to think of, too. If I hadn't checked you all would have been lost. Now take your choice of two things. Either you must be content to wait for my word, or else we will part here, each to do his own work, in his own way. Which is it?"

"You don't mean to let him escape?"

"No; his trail is nearly run out. Before this week is ended he will have his deserts."

hasn't much education in the English language."

"That is unnecessary," replied the trapper; "he'll know what it means the very minute he sets eye on it, and he'll know that me and Ned have run away with you."

"But he will not suspect we have taken this direction," replied Mackintosh.

"He won't know it, but he'll spect it, and as like as not he's fellerin' hard after us this very minute."

"Let him follow!" exclaimed Mackintosh. "If he catches us, are we powerless to help ourselves? For my part I can't help believing I would experience a genuine pleasure in using that treacherous scamp as a target. Why was he fool enough to leave Miona alone, when it was so easy for her to slip out and make off?"

"He wouldn't have done it if he had known we war about, and she wouldn't have run away if she hadn't known we war."

Now and then Nick paused in his paddling for a few seconds and listened, but nothing of his pursuers was heard, and the only sound that reached their ears was that of the wind blowing through the trees around them.

The three noticed that quite a breeze was blowing, and that it was irregular and increasing. The faint moon, too, was obscured by flying clouds, and there was every indication of a rapidly approaching storm. The air was quite chilly, and Nick declared that a drenching, driving rain would be upon them by day-break.

"Will that be favorable or unfavorable to us?" asked Ned.

"It will be the worst thing in the world, for we've got to stop 'till the storm ends, and that'll give the varmints the time they want to find where we've gone, and the chances are they'll overhaul us afore we kin git across to the other stream."

"But we are leaving no trail."

"That don't make no difference; just as soon as they larn we've headed toward the north, they'll know what p'int I'm aimin' fur, and they'll know how to head us off."

"Then we can turn back and take another direction."

Nick made no reply, for he did not wish to alarm his companions, but the course proposed by Mackintosh was the very one he wished to avoid. Turned back into the country again, with a band of Blackfeet between him and British territory, it would be almost impossible to escape discovery or recapture by these bloodhounds, who would watch every avenue of escape, and close around the three, with a celerity and certainty almost impossible to thwart.

Nick Whiffles knew another thing that was not especially pleasant to him, although no reference to it had yet escaped his lips, and it was certain that it would never be learned by any others through him.

His position toward Woo-wol-na was in one respect an anomalous one. The gratitude which that chief still retained for services done many years before, was such as to cause him to overlook the part he had acted in the rescue of Hugh Bandman from death; but, in forgetting that, the forbearance of the Blackfoot leader had reached its utmost limit. It was certain he would discover the part played by Nick in this business, which was far more serious in every respect.

For helping in the abduction of Miona, Woo-wol-na had no forgiveness, and none would be more ready or eager than he to take swift and sure vengeance upon the old trapper for it. In case Nick should succeed, he would be compelled to change the location of his "home" to some point where he would be safe beyond the vengeance of his enemies, who, infuriated by their disappointment, would burn the old cabin to the ground.

All this I say Nick fully understood, and there was a certain sadness in the thought; but, at the same time, it did not abate his energy for his friends in the least. He had gone into this business, fully understanding the risks involved, and yet had done so, not willingly only, but with an eagerness to benefit those he loved so well, and to do an act of humanity, which his conscience told him was right.

Some three or four miles were passed, and then the creek became so narrow, and the current so rapid, that further progress in the canoe was out of the question. It was therefore run against the bank, and the three disembarked.

"Now, if I leave the boat here, the varmints will be sure to find it," said Nick, "and it'll show 'em just where to take our trail."

"Take it with us, for you will need it at the other stream," said Mackintosh, stooping down to lift it from the water.

"No," replied the trapper "we don't need it fur that. I s'pose I got a dozen boats in the different streams around the country, and if we kin only make that creek, I know where to put my hand on what I want. This boat is quite handy to carry with us, but I'll take it part way, so that it sha'n't help them any."

With which he lifted it over his head, and strode off through the woods, the lovers following, and Calamity in advance of all.

There could no longer be any doubt that a storm was rapidly gathering and would soon break upon them. The dim light of the moon was so obscured by the tumultuous clouds constantly sweeping past its face, that they made their way with considerable difficulty through the wood and over the broken country. Mackintosh noticed that the ground was rising so rapidly that they were ascending quite an elevation, perhaps some high ridge that was the water-shed of this section.

All at once, the wind increased to a gale, and several large drops of water struck the face of Mackintosh. Nick Whiffles made a sudden dive to the right, and plunged beneath an oak of dense growth, and beside which a large rock was discovered.

"That's the best we kin do," he called out, his voice hardly audible in the roaring wind; "back up ag'in it."

The lovers placed themselves against the rock, and the blanket of Mackintosh covered both. Then the trapper, by some skillful maneuvering, managed to make a sort of roof with the canoe, and thus a respectable shelter was improvised.

By this time, the storm was fairly upon them, the trees were swaying in the blast, and the great oak itself seemed as if it were about to be torn up by the roots and hurled like its own leaves through the air. The rain came driving, almost horizontally, with the fury of a thousand mitrailleuses, while an impenetrable blackness wrapped earth and sky in its gloomy pall.

What seemed strange, there was scarcely any thunder or lightning. Away off on the borders of the horizon, a few faint flashes were seen, and these were followed by the distant rumble of thunder; but it was only for a few minutes, and of scarcely power to attract notice in the fury of the rain itself.

The swirl of the wind and rain was so great, that for a time, none of the three persons cowering under the shelter of the tree, the canoe, the rock, and their blankets, attempted to exchange a word with each other. Miona shrunk closer to her lover, who pressed her to his side, as if he was never to permit her to leave him again, while Nick stood grim, thoughtful, and vigilant, with Calamity crouching between his feet.

For two hours the storm raged with unabated violence, and then it ceased as suddenly as it had begun. The fall of rain was suddenly cut short, the wind after a few puffs, died away, and it was all over.

It had scarcely ended, when all three noticed an increasing light in the sky.

"The moon is coming out again," said Mackintosh.

"It's the sun coming up," replied Nick; "day is breaking."

"What a relief after this dreadful darkness!" exclaimed Miona; "how glad I am!"

"You'd better be sorry," replied Nick, "that we haven't another night just beginnin'." We ain't ten miles from the lodges, and there's no tellin' how near a dozen of the varmints are to us."

He said no more, but he might have added that there was a conviction upon him that the real danger of the undertaking had just begun, and that a terrible experience was to come upon them in the next few hours.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIGNAL FIRES.

The light rapidly increased, and the fugitives were soon able to gain some idea of their situation. They found they were ascending a gradually-sloping ridge, several hundred feet in height, and were yet quite a distance from the top.

Deeming it useless to carry the canoe any further, Nick left it where it had served the purpose of sheltering them, and they resumed their flight without delay. All three were hungry, and had no more food in their possession; but the trapper was desirous of reaching the top of the ridge before halting for breakfast.

Miona felt the need of sustenance, but she was not the one to make her need known in the presence of danger, and she walked along cheerily and bravely, in the same hopeful spirits as her lover, who seemed never weary of looking upon and admiring her beauty. This was the first time he had seen her in the glare of sunlight since the long years ago, when he had met her like a wood-nymph, while visiting his traps in the wood, and he looked upon her with that fond, loving look born of pure, deep affection, and which was returned by her own lustrous eyes.

Her dress was almost entirely Indian in its character, and yet arranged with a taste that set off her beauty, perhaps, to greater advantage than a civilized costume would have done.

Although the shadow of a great danger constantly hung over them, yet they forgot it for the time in the pleasure of each other's society, and they chatted, and laughed, and talked of the past, the present and the future, as though there never was to be anything but sunshine, and love, and happiness for them.

"Let 'em talk—let 'em talk," mused the old trapper, as he occasionally glanced at them; "it would be a condemned pity if I should stop 'em, for there's no tellin' how soon they'll have to hush, anyway. I only wish we had a dozen hours of darkness afore us; I think I could feel easy then."

While communing with himself, he was constantly looking before, behind, and all around him, as though in the momentary expectation of some great danger.

"This rain has wiped out our trail," he added, "but it's 'bout sartin' that that Red Bear knows where we've started fur, and if he ain't close behind us, like 'nough he's on ahead somewhere."

At the end of half an hour they were at the summit of the ridge, and they took the leisure to look about them. Their view to the rear was so extensive that they could trace the creek up which they had ascended for a long distance, on its winding way through the woods. Nick even indicated the point where were the ruins of the Blackfoot village, although the woods at this point were so dense that the view was indistinct and unsatisfactory.

Long and intently the three scanned the intervening stretch of forest and broken country, seeking to catch some glimpse of their enemies, but none were able to discover the first indications of pursuit.

"It ain't no sign they ain't follerin' us," remarked Nick, after the failure of their scrutiny, "for the varmints ar' cunnin' and could dodge into cover and watch us all day without our gettin' sight of one of thar top-knots."

Turning to the north, a pleasant scene was spread out before them. The ridge sloped away as gradually in that direction as in the other, while about ten miles distant rose another ridge almost precisely similar to the one upon which they were standing. Between these two spread out a low, beautiful valley, through which several streams meandered; the whole country was covered with wood, although it was more scattered in some places than in others, and at certain points the grounds were rocky and rugged.

Looking away to the north, the same valley could be traced until wood and stream grew indistinct and mingled with the hazy blue of the horizon.

Across the intervening tract of territory—some ten miles in extent, as has been shown—it was necessary for the party to push their way, before they could feel warranted in enjoying any degree of safety.

"On t'other side that ridge," said Nick, "is the creek that runs into the south branch of the Saskatchewan. Ef we can once git into my canoe at that without the varmints bein' in front, I'll feel easy."

"Then let us delay no longer," said Miona. "We've got to have somethin' to eat, or we'll find a condemned difficulty in travelin'."

You see, we ain't goin' to reach t'other side much afore night, and we can't do it on empty stomachs."

"Shall we not be incurring extra danger by kindling a fire in such an elevated position?" asked Mackintosh.

"Yes," was the reply; "we must go fur 'nough down the slope to make sure they won't see us."

They descended entirely to the bottom, where Ned Mackintosh and Miona busied themselves in building a fire, while Nick, cautioning them not to wander away, set out in quest of their breakfast.

The trapper's usual luck did not attend him this time. After hunting for a long time without getting a shot, he lost all patience, and producing the line that he always carried with him, cast it into the nearest stream. Here, in a few minutes, he hauled out several plump fish, which he quickly gathered up and

carried back to camp, where his friends were anxiously expecting him.

The fire had been replenished several times, and it required but a few minutes more for the preparation of their morning meal. All were very hungry, and when they had finished their repast, it was found that there was none at all left to take away with them against the return of hunger.

But they could well afford to wait twenty-four hours, and Nick declared that they must think no more of food until they were out of this dangerous valley, and safe on the other side of the ridge.

"By mighty!" he exclaimed, looking up to the sky, "I don't know where the day has gone, but it's blamed near noon this minute."

It seemed impossible to believe this declaration, but a glance at the sun showed that he was not far from the truth, and the three hurried forward upon their journey, like persons guilty of some great dereliction of duty for which they were anxious to atone.

The ground was found to be very uneven, so that it was impossible to make any sort of progress such as they desired; but they pressed steadily on until the afternoon was well advanced, when an unexpected obstacle presented itself.

While leading the way, Nick Whiffles suddenly found himself upon the bank of a rushing torrent too broad to leap over, and too deep to think of wading. He paused in amazement for a few seconds, not understanding what it meant, as he had not noticed this stream when standing upon the ridge in the morning; but a moment's reflection told him it was all very natural, being caused by the heavy fall of rain in the night, and which had not time to gather until after the whites were down the slope and into the valley.

What was to be done? was the involuntary question that rose to the lips of all, as they stood on the bank of the rushing, muddy torrent, and felt that some means must be devised for reaching the other side.

"It has risen very suddenly," said Miona; "why can we not wait till it subsides again?"

"It won't do it afore to-morrow," replied Nick; "we must get over somehow or other. If we can't do it here, we must find a spot where we kin."

There was reason to hope that there was some place where this could be accomplished in safety, and the three began searching along the bank for such a point.

This consumed more precious time, and with a feeling of alarm that it would be difficult to depict, they saw the afternoon drawing to a close, while no more than half the distance across the valley was passed.

Finally a projecting rock was discovered, from the edge of which it seemed possible to make the leap.

"I think that'll answer," said Nick, as he carefully measured the distance with his eye. "I've jumped further when I was younger, but the difficulty, you see, is with the gal."

"Am I the only trouble?" asked Miona.

"That's it—hulloa!"

As the exclamation escaped the trapper, Miona made a light leap as though she intended to spring into the water, but instead she landed as lightly as a fawn upon the opposite bank, leaving quite a space between where her feet struck and the edge of the stream.

An exclamation of surprise escaped from the two she had left upon the other side, and she looked saucily back and called out:

"Beat that if you can!"

Calamity made a slight run and jumped with might and main, his feet striking in the footprints of the girl.

Nick followed, landing a little short. Calamity looked at his friends a moment, and then turned about, as though he considered such a performance too undignified for him, and then stepping into the torrent began swimming his way over.

The current was so rapid that it was a work of extreme difficulty for him, but he struggled bravely and succeeded in making the other shore, although he was carried quite a distance down-stream.

But the passage was safely made, and all were considerably elated thereat. In searching for this point they had been forced quite a distance up-stream and not a little out of their way; but still the long, elevated ridge stretched out across their path, and all they had to do was to reach and pass that. On the other side flowed the stream, which they believed was to bear them into a haven of safety. There were still a goodly number of miles before them, and it was impossible to cross the ridge before night should set in, but if there were no Blackfeet close in their rear, there was reason to hope for a safe deliverance.

They had been over the stream but a few minutes, and were picking their way carefully along, when Calamity showed so much uneasiness that it attracted the attention of all. He whined now and then, and elevating his head sniffed the air in a way which showed he sensed danger.

Nick Whiffles did not check his speed until they had gone some distance further, where he walked to the top of a rock to make his observation, his two friends following him.

First he looked to the ridge which they had crossed, and as he did so, he was seen to start and heard to utter "By mighty!"

Both Mackintosh and Miona gazed in the same direction; but, although both were gifted with a keen eyesight, and both had an extensive experience in wood craft, they failed to discover the exciting cause of his alarm.

The trapper stood for perhaps three minutes looking intently and unwaveringly at the ridge, and then he turned square about and looked the other way.

"By mighty!" was the expression that escaped him, with more emphasis than before, and then he looked back and forth from one ridge to another.

Very naturally his companions began to feel some concern at his manner, and Miona inquired what it meant.

"Look yonder!" he replied, pointing to the ridge on the left, "and tell me whether you see any thing."

"We have been looking in both directions," replied Mackintosh, "and can not divine what it is."

Nick now indicated the precise point and added:

"Don't look among the trees, but above 'em."

"Ah! a camp-fire!" exclaimed Ned.

"No; it ain't—it's a signal-fire!" corrected Nick.

Just the faintest, dimmest outlines of a column of smoke could be seen rising through the tree-tops on the opposite ridge; and, while carefully scanning it, Ned observed that it did not ascend in a straight line, as it would have done from a stationary fire, but that it waved from side to side, in a serpentine manner, showing that the flame which caused it was regularly changed from one spot to another.

"How is that?" inquired Ned, after remarking this peculiar appearance, "I do not understand it."

"I've seen that thing afore," replied Nick, almost sullenly; "one of the varmints is in the top of the tree with a torch in his hand. Now, take a look at t'other ridge."

This was done, and precisely the same thing was seen upon the summit of that.

There must be an Indian in one of these trees, too!"

Yes; and a whole pack of 'em at the bottom, too; they've been watchin' us all the afternoon and signalin' to each other. They know just where we are this minute, and they're puttin' things in shape to gobble us."

Nick seemed in a more despondent mood than either of his companions had noticed since starting, and they naturally partook of his mental depression.

He chafed at the remembrance of his delay in getting across this ten-mile valley. Here the better part of a day had been spent in wandering about in full view of their enemies, and there was no possibility now of deceiving them as to their movements.

They could only wait until darkness closed about them, and then attempt to steal over the ridge without being discovered. There was a possibility of this, but Nick Whiffles was satisfied in his own mind that Red Bear and others were closer to them than his companions suspected.

The infuriated Blackfoot did not conclude to wait until night, but was doubtless stealing through the wood after them.

What meant the uneasiness of Calamity, but that danger was close at hand? Remarkable as was the sagacity of the canine, his master knew that he had not seen, or having seen, did not understand the meaning of the signal-fires in the distance.

There was something else that alarmed him. It was in the woods, close about them.

"What is it, pup?" asked Nick, as he retreated from his exposed position upon the rock; "do you smell varmints?"

There was nothing particularly noticeable in his reply, but it was of such a character that his master grasped his rifle more firmly, and said in a low tone to Mackintosh:

"Be ready for the varmints any minute."

"I am ready," replied Ned, feeling in his breast-pocket to make sure his revolver was there. "It is getting dark, and if we can keep out of their way until night, I have hopes of giving them the slip."

"If we hadn't got hindered so in crossin' this blamed place, there'd be a better chance for us, but it's going to be the condemnedest difficulty we ever was in afore."

Nick Whiffles did not forget that his companions had not slept a wink upon the preceding night, unless they might have snatched a few minutes when in the canoe, and he had the strongest doubts of their ability to stand the strain to which they would be subjected through the coming darkness.

But there was a present danger which now required all his thoughts, and he led his friends stealthily and slowly through the wood, so as to escape the observation of any who were stationed on an elevated look-out.

Suddenly Calamity gave such unmistakable evidence of uneasiness that all paused, feeling that the danger was so close at hand that there was no need of attempting to proceed further.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 295.)

"FOR THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE."

See Deuteronomy, xii: 23. The blood being the source from which the system is built up, and from which we derive our mental as well as physical capabilities, how important that it should be kept pure! If it contain vile, festering poisons, all our functions become enfeebled. Settling upon important organs, as the lungs, liver and kidneys, the effect is most disastrous. Hence it behooves all to keep their blood in a perfectly healthy condition, and more especially does this apply at this particular season of the year than at any other. No matter what the exciting cause may be, the real cause of many of our diseases is in the blood. Now, Dr. Pierce does not wish to place his Golden Medical Discovery in the catalogue of quack patent nostrums, but recommending it to cure every disease, not only so, but recommending it, on the contrary, there are hundreds of diseases that he acknowledges it will not cure; but what he does claim is this, that there is but one form of blood disease that it will not cure, and that it will free the blood and system of all other blood-poisons, be they animal, vegetable or mineral. The Golden Medical Discovery is warranted by him to cure the worst cases of Scrofulous and Ulcerated Sores of the Neck, Legs, or other parts, and all Scrofulous Diseases of the Bones, as White Swellings, Fever Sores, Hip-joint and Spinal Diseases—all of which belong to Scrofulous diseases.

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NEVER HOME IN TIME.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

When you came courting, Mr. Jones, in my young better days, You always was a punctual man, and so you won my praise; I think you always came too soon, and thought it was a crime To be one little minute late, and so you came in time.

You sought my hand; I gave it you, and blessed my happy fate That gave a man so punctual who'd never come in late. I thought that I should surely live a life that was sublime, And ne'er be harrowed by a step that never came in time.

Sit down a moment, Mr. Jones, I have a word to speak; My object, Mr. Jones, is strong, although my voice is weak. Since that sad day I married you and heard my marriage-bells, The moment you were wanted home you then were somewhere else.

Don't start to go; sit still a bit, and do not look so grim. You see you're haster to go than e'er you are to come; No matter how the table's set with fruits from many a clime, It makes no difference to you, you're never home in time.

I look out of the window, and I stand out by the gate Till I have frozen both my ears, and vowed that I would wait. Till I was frozen clear to death and laid to you the crime, And had you hung for it because you ne'er came home in time.

No matter who the visitors that happened to be about; And even when my folks are here you'll take your dinner out; And though I wait till everything is cold except my wrath, We never hear your tardy step come shuffling up the path.

Put down your hat; there, listen, sir, I've got a word to say; I'm pretty nearly tired of this, and have been many a day; This thing has got to be dried up, let it occur once more, And I'll snatch you bald-headed than you ever were before.

I've got my dander up now, Jones, and my foot I will put down, And I intend to make of you the earliest man in town; If you're ever late again now, Jones, you over the coals I'll haul, And if you're late the second time you needn't come at all.

A Dangerous Experiment.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

HALF a dozen skaters were darting hither and thither in mazy evolutions, while one level-headed comrade whirled in the slow time of a dreamy ice-waltz, and the rest of the party strolled as idle spectators on the shore.

"Beauty crowned with a thunder-cloud!" said Arch Lewis, with a gesture indicating a figure which stood apart. The smile was not inapt, for a black burnoose worn over her head and shoulders, fell like dusky drapery in which was set a singularly striking face. Purest oval and clearest olive, with a short curve of scarlet lip, and jetty curling lashes shading the lustrous southern eyes that were deep and dark with a passionate melancholy as she gazed across the pale northern scene spreading away under an opal-tinted sky, the steely glitter of the ice-bound river; the tall trees lifting their skeleton tracery of twig and limb against the luminous atmosphere, making a fair picture even to the weary eyes of Vivia d'Arcier.

Arch's companion made no remark, but presently he approached her deferentially. "You would find this more entrancing if your heart were not among the roses of the south, Miss d'Arcier."

"Are you a magician that you should read my thoughts, Mr. Lisle? I can't get over my longing for home, but I trust I am not so ungrateful as to intrude my moods upon the rest. I must mend my manners if I have been so rude."

"Why not give the privilege of sympathy with your moods?"

She looked at him askance, then turned to regard the skaters, answering lightly:

"They are too changeable. I would not inflict the pence of following them upon the most hardened sinner here, and that is Mr. Foster. Do see how he is exerting himself to win poor Beth Lewis's heart away."

"Poor Beth, indeed!" cried Arch, indignantly, as he came up. "Miss d'Arcier, I will not permit any charitable vailing of the reprehensible deeds of that young person, if she is my sister. It is as natural for Beth to flirt as to breathe, but there is no earthly excuse for her keeping that wretched Fos. dangling miserably on her string. I give you my word that she has made him propose to her three times in as many months and refused him every time. Did you ever hear of anything more diabolical?"

"He will not think it so when final acceptance rewards his persistence."

"Will it, though? Ah, if persistence always wins, I shall take heart again," pointedly, in undertone confidence.

The beautiful, proud face froze into coolest indifference, and Arch was glad when a skate strap slipped its fastening, bringing the waltz to an abrupt termination near them. The laughter and badinage attending the slight disaster covered his chagrin.

"Aren't you dizzy, Beth?" asked Beth's bosom friend, Kitty Holme. "I am, from watching you."

"Not a bit of it. Too bad we had to stop so. It was like heaven, like a hashish dream, floating, floating, so light and uplifted, almost as if one were treading on air."

"What do you know about hashish, Miss Beth?"

"I know all about it. I took some once; now, Arch, you needn't look so shocked at the fact! It was long ago, more's the pity. It's glorious, just that. Are we going to finish our waltz, Fos?" Very free and easy was Miss Beth with this devoted cavalier of hers.

"No," said her brother, decidedly. "I am not going to have you break your neck after one warning, while I am by to prevent it. Time we were going back, I say."

"Oh, well, when my affectionate brother takes that tone," sighed Beth, resignedly. "Say, Arch, what are you so short about all at once? You ought to try hashish. It would waft you into such a state of beatitude that I would have a little respite. 'Respite, respite, and repentance!'" she quoted, taking a dramatic attitude. "Mine the respite, and yours the repentance. It would do you no harm."

She flashed a meaning glance from him toward Miss d'Arcier. "She suspects I made a fool of myself there," thought Arch, and began making himself agreeable to Kitty Holme, while Beth rattled on. "Aren't you sorry you weren't with us, Vivia? Skating is a

splendid exhilarant, and you look like an iceberg."

"Feeling like an iceberg is my normal condition, I believe."

"How dolefully she says it! You wouldn't suppose, Mr. Lisle, that she can excel all of us, but it's the truth. She isn't unfeeling, only indolent. Be pitiful, and cut out that tiresome Fos. for the walk home," the last in a whisper so appealing that Norman Lisle could not resist it. Beth rewarded him by talking of Vivia d'Arcier all the way.

"That pride of hers will be the ruin of her," cried the outspoken little lady, emphatically. "I wouldn't be her, with all her beauty and all her fortune for the world. You see, people don't understand her, and without meaning it, she will repel the one that loves her best with that haughty reserve which is natural to her. I know."

She stole a glance at him, but his inscrutable face baffled any inquisitive designs she may have had upon it. She might shrewdly guess his position toward her friend, but Mr. Lisle's heart was by no means an open page for those who chose to read.

There was a vast, old-fashioned, well-ceiled room in the vast, old-fashioned, steep-roofed house where they were all staying, which the three girls occupied in common. A couple of beds stood in the diagonal corners; there was a big black bureau and wardrobe, and tables and chairs islanding the sea of polished floor, and Kitty Holme, who was first to reach there, stood, with both hands clasping her head, looking distressed, as the other two came in.

"I believe I have the neuralgia," she said. "There's a sharp, darting pain all through my head. I might have known what would come of wearing that flimsy cloud. Ma always said it was no protection against the wind."

"But you look sweet in it, Kitty. I'll tell you; take morphia. It will relieve the pain, and make your eye bright in the bargain. I'll bring it from the medicine chest."

"What a pity these things hurt one," she said, as she came back with the bottle in her hand. "If you have an obdurate lover you want to conquer, you had better do it to-night, Kit. Take just enough to make you brilliant and altogether lovely. I wish I dared, but I know myself too well to risk it. I'd be an opium-eater for life if I ever allowed myself to tamper with it."

"I'm not afraid. How much do you take?" "People begin with from an eighth to a third of a grain, but you'll want more for the pain. Let me put out about what will give you the proper degree of excitement. See, this is the way you measure it. Hashish is safer handling, and has a happier effect." She lifted the snowy powder upon the point of a tiny penknife and crushed it on a bit of paper, separating the quantity desired carefully. Miss d'Arcier was silently observant.

"I thought it was narcotic," said Kitty, growing a trifle nervous.

"So it is, but there is a stimulated, trance-like state which lasts sometimes for hours before the sleepiness comes on; longer with beginners than habitual users of the drug. You remember Doll Trent, don't you?"

"Perfectly. How I used to envy her in the evenings, and pity her next morning. Such a miserable object as she was then."

"Well, she had all sorts of delightful visions that one might risk 'next morning' for if it only stopped there. The trouble is one's pretty sure to take too big a dose in the end."

Later, the same gay young party who had been upon the river met beneath the parlor lamp-light. There was a dreamy, yet shining light in Kitty's eyes, and the soft laugh rippling often from her lips was pleasant to hear. Vivia d'Arcier watched her covertly; herself always quiet, she was even more quiet than usual now, and presently she was missing from their midst, and only Norman Lisle saw the dusky shape flit out into the moonlit night.

He made an excuse and followed, but it was some time before he discovered her in a remote walk which wound amid tall shrubs and evergreens, and when he did, he stopped short in unutterable wonder and amazement.

A light snowfall was crusted upon the frozen earth, and the full moon riding high with a trail of fleecy cloud in her wake shed an ivory luster on the scene. Vivia, with perfect face uplifted, was circling all alone, light as a spirit, singing softly the measure of her eerie dance. In his astonishment, Lisle hesitated, not knowing whether to advance or withdraw, but the crunching of the snow beneath his feet, and the crunching of the snow beneath his feet, stood still, and he decided the matter. She reached her, with a ringing silvery laugh as he drew near.

"I know I have shocked you," she said, with a naive charm as it was unusual with her; "but the moon affects me like other lunatics. What a perfect night! Mere commonplace skating in daylight has no charm, but I was thinking how different it would be to glide over yonder river of crystal running through frosted fairyland. It's safe, of course?"

"Of course," he echoed. "It was thoroughly tested this afternoon. Will you take me for your escort and go?"

"Yes; if you get the skates."

"I'll have them, by fair means or by foul," in mock-herotic tones.

"Don't tell any one, please."

"To hear is to obey. Have you wraps enough?"

"Plenty." He darted toward the house too elated at the prospect of securing her alone to himself to puzzle much over this unaccountable freak, the wonderful change in her. He was back soon, and they went down the slope leading to the river, Vivia talking with that unwonted vivacity all the way. There was a flush rising in her cheeks, and a streaming, brilliant light in those magnificent eyes, glancing at him restlessly, that woke undefinable misgivings in Norman's mind.

He put the skates on the little arched feet, encased in distracting boots, that had a share in her unrest, for they carried her with smooth, undulating motion over the glittering surface, but not out of easy ear-shot until he had secured his own skates and turned toward her.

"Ready. Which direction do you prefer to take, Miss d'Arcier?"

With no reply but her gay laugh she was already off, the sharp ring and bright flash of the steel cutting through the evening air. There was nothing for Mr. Lisle to do but to accept the implied challenge. He was not so well-skilled in the art as he could have wished, and after a minute dropped into steady, even strokes, that left the slender shape flying far in advance. He thought the perverse influence prompting her would change, and it seemed so as she slackened her speed and allowed him to gain upon her.

"It makes one wish one were an angel flying through space, doesn't it? But then, according to Laplace's theory, floating atoms made up the world, and the rule holds good yet; we would only be drawn down to dull earth again. Ah, I forgot! angels are spiritualized creations. Now, suppose we could

evade the law of gravitation, and go mounting a 'stair of stars.' No, Mr. Lisle! I am not to be so easily caught. I am Will-o'-the-wisp, and you are to follow, follow, follow."

What a shock of absolute terror ran through Norman's frame. Had she gone mad? He blamed himself bitterly for letting it escape him thus long that she was not herself. A cold moisture broke out upon his forehead; he stopped stock still to reflect, hoping a little that she might return. A futile hope, for the flying figure passed a bend and was lost to view, but her clear voice lifted in song echoed back. His face settled into a white, intense, resolute expression, as he started again in pursuit. There followed a chase which seemed to him more unreal than that he ever did in the time afterward, when he had only to shut his eyes to bring up a vivid picture of the wide white slope rising on either side, of the glittering transparency winding ribbon-like through it, over which that tantalizing young creature flashed like a veritable Will-o'-the-wisp, giving him glimpses now and then of her crimson cheeks and wild bright eyes, while the sweet voice rung out in an unnatural mirth which made him shudder.

Neither saw how that fleecy trail of cloud had spread and darkened, neither felt the rising gale which came in bitter sweeps from the low, distant hilltops. His every nerve was strained in that exciting race, and he was gaining slowly and steadily, gaining faster and faster, for her factitious energy was dying out, drawing close, when a mass of those blackening clouds was driven across the moon's calm face and somber darkness closed upon the scene below. In his eagerness Lisle pressed on, then his foot struck some foreign substance imbedded in the ice, and the shock spun him around in a dizzy whirl that ended in a fall.

He was stunned for a moment, and when he regained sight and sense she was kneeling beside him, shivering, and seeming with a dragging effort of will to slowly recover herself.

"Oh, what have I done? Are you hurt; can't you get up? I did not mean it—I did not, indeed."

He made an effort to raise himself, but sunk back and set his white lips hard. He clasped a fold of her mantle, determined she should not escape him again, and after a few seconds spoke in a voice which he vainly tried to render natural.

"Don't be alarmed; I have broken my leg, I think."

She seemed to hear without taking in the full meaning of his words. She passed her hand over her forehead, and said dreamily: "Then we can't go back. I'm glad of it, for I am tired. I'd like to go to sleep if it were not so cold."

A suspicion, vague at first, gained ground in his mind.

"Miss d'Arcier—Vivia, what have you done? What have you taken? Tell me instantly."

She evaded the question, laughing nervously, but he repeated it, and his impelling glance drew a reluctant reply.

"Morphia. It doesn't affect me like most people; it gives me wild fancies; but Beth's talk possessed me to take it. I'm sorry for you; I'm over it now."

The sweet, slow tones thrilled him with a fear greater than her previous excitement had done, and a groan which his own almost intolerable pain had not wrung from him crossed his lips.

"Vivia, rouse yourself. It is certain death to yield to lassitude now. Everything depends upon you. We will both freeze here unless you get help."

But the lethargy of the opium-trance held her; she made an effort to comprehend and obey him as he explained their danger and implored her to arouse; but she had no energy left, and no care for any future.

"Talk to me, Vivia. Are you cold?" "No; deliciously warm, and oh! so calm. This is peace, this is love."

Her last word inspired him. He had lacked courage to avow himself before, and it seemed like taking an unfair advantage to do so now, but anything would be pardonable which might bring her back to herself. He sent a daring, longing look straight up into her eyes.

"My love! you shall hear me at last. I love you, Vivia. Your coldness and reserve shall not thwart my telling it now. I love you, and I know that you love me."

He found the little hidden hand and carried it passionately to his lips, thrilled and almost awed by his own presumption. The indignant pride he had thought to arouse was all dormant. She did not rebuke him. Instead she bent down until her lips touched his, murmuring very low:

"I love you, Norman. Now you know my secret. That was why I took the morphia."

"What was why?"

"To make—you—love me." It was the last direct response he could gain from her. She murmured brokenly and sunk into unconsciousness despite all his efforts.

The night grew blacker. The wind whistled shrilly through the tree-tops, and a fine, cutting sleet began to fall. He had drawn down her head to rest upon his arm, and he shielded her as best he could, but despair and cold were doing their work with Norman; his pain lessened a sense approaching comfort stole over him; then he gave a great start out of his momentary torpor. He thought at first his sight was deceiving him. He called out with a ringing halloo, and struggled to rise, only to sink back wrenched with renewed pain. But he continued to shout like one mad. The sound pierced Vivia's heavy slumber, and she started awake, bewildered. The power of the drug had worn itself out in that deep sleep.

"Awake!" he cried, joyously. "Not too late. See, it is a light!"

And a light it was, away at the left, twinkling like a distant star, brought out by the increasing gloom.

"How did we come here? How?" and there she stopped short, as remembrance flashed across her. He could not see her face in the stormy dimness, but he felt the change, the armor of pride resumed.

"Vivia, dear Vivia!" imploringly, and his tone said more than his words.

"Don't!" she cried, sharply. "I never can forgive myself for my folly. I don't ask you to forgive, but to forget it. And oh! don't tell any one, please," breaking down suddenly, and covering her face with a gesture eloquent of a proud woman's shame. "I was frightened, and meant to go to my room, when I found I was losing control of myself. Ah, if I had but done so. That hateful spell!"

"But for your sake I wish that heavenly spell had never broken!" He never thought of inconsistency in making the declaration. "I would rather not be saved, if I must lose you. Be kind as Vivia of your dream; tell me why you took the morphia, and I promise not to betray you."

The memory of the past few hours, and a thought of his exposure and suffering overcame pride. By a rift of moonlight breaking through, he read the shy, awakened tenderness in the luminous Southern eyes.

"I was so weary of that icy statue, myself! I longed to come down from my lonely pedestal."

"But I will not have you trying that experiment again. It is too dangerous."

"I shall never wish to do so, Norman."

And the anxious friends of the two young people heard only of the accident and Lisle's injury, which detained them over night at a farm-house near the river. The leg was not broken after all, but a sprained ankle served for as good claim upon love's sympathy, and a wedding was the result of that midwinter night's dream.

THE RIVER'S STORY.

BY FRANK M. IMBRIE.

The sun bent down to frolic with the pebbles strewn 'long the beach, where in her dawning glow

She stood, a woman, when in dreamy languor, A child—when listening to the ebb and flow Of warm, glad waves that shoreward turned to kiss

The wee bare feet in sportive, rapturous bliss. She plucked a wave-borne, emerald-circled blossom, A rivulet floating, a bird-like thing, That in the pulsing hand folds petals waxen

And golden anthers, as they outward fling Their clasped-rose odor on the still, dead air, Cradling a tilted heart, a touch left bare,

Again the rustling willows tell their story Of faded blooms dead in a child's soft hand; Anon, they breathe a later whisper, gathered From murmured tones from flash of troth-plight band

And gossip to the rushes far and wide Of lovers, strolling by the river's side. In life's midsummer, with its rose-crushed fragrance

She stand and listens to the river's tone, A mournful cadence wakes the slumbering echoes, A voice breaks on the pebbly shore, a moan, So weird, so sad, so filled with longings wild, That one would scarcely know her lips had smiled.

"Oh, sun-bathed bowers that held the tempting lures, Rich promise of the royal days to come! Oh, fragile blooms of tropical aroma, Faded, ere yet their timid life begun! Oh, heart! where now the golden threads of brightness,

Fashioned by Love, by Fancy's fingers spun? Oh, sobbing river, cease to tell the story Of wayside flowers, withering as they smile; Oh, memory! yield the Lethargic stream, Wrap heart and brain in lotus-power the while; Anchored too fast! Ah, poor heart broken, Perchance you'll find, somewhere, a useful isle!

Love vs. a Rain Storm.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

MOLLIE REDMOND was tired of staying in the house. She was a vivacious, restless little mortal, and the accident that had confined her for three weeks to the pleasant parlors on Cambridge square was a serious matter to her.

What made it more aggravating was that it had occurred while she was at Uncle Herbert's, where she invariably had "a glorious time"—that is how Mollie expressed it; and that on this very day, when she was to go out again, it should rain!

"It was meant," and so Mollie stood in the shade of the lace curtains, drumming the tips of her fingers upon the window-panes, and looking with rueful eyes upon the steadily descending, drizzling drops, and the murky tides that rushed along the gutters.

"If only Frank would send me a nice, long letter to-day, or—" What other amusement Miss Redmond was about to suggest must forever remain an unsolved problem to mortal ken; for, at that moment, aunt Anna entered the parlor. She came straight to where Mollie stood, and placed her white left hand, where a diamond solitaire and a plain, broad wedding ring rested, upon the girl's shoulder.

"Mollie, dear, I am obliged to go out this morning. In case you get weary of novels and fancy work, I would like to get you to do a favor for me."

"Certainly, auntie; I shall be delighted. What is it?"

"To go in the library and arrange my escriptor. The picture-hanger was so careless as to upset it yesterday, and I fear the contents are sadly disordered. And look carefully for that list of tableaux I mentioned last night. We must commence to prepare for that affair soon."

"All right, auntie," and Mollie wandered into the library, picked up a book that she liked, and forgot about the escriptor until nearly lunch-time.

Seating herself before it, she soon arranged its contents, and found the desired list, and something else that interested her. It was a faded miniature case, containing a picture of a handsome girl. On the white satin, opposite the face, was written: "Herbert. August—18—"

The luncheon-bell rung, and Mollie went down, meeting aunt Anna, who had just come in, upon the stairs.

"You must be glad to get back, auntie; aren't you almost drowned?"

"Oh, no; I do not mind a rain-storm," said aunt Anna, laughing.

At luncheon, Mollie announced, "I found the list, auntie, and an old picture of a pretty girl."

"Did you know her?" asked aunt Anna, smiling, and passing some cold chicken to Mollie.

"No. Who was she?"

"Your uncle Herbert's affiancée, once."

"Why, auntie! And did she die?"

"Oh, no. She is living still, in New York."

"Then why did not uncle Herbert marry her? Did your yellow hair entangle his heart to the exclusion of her image?" cried Mollie, gayly.

"You must ask uncle Herbert to tell you about it. He says it was a case of 'love versus a rain storm.'"

In the afternoon a note came from Mr. Maynard's office, saying that he meant to take the ladies to the opera in the evening, as he thought Mollie well enough to go out if well wrapped up. "Frank Eustace will meet us there," he added.

Of course Mollie was delighted with the contents of the note, especially the last sentence; and flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes greeted uncle Herbert's return.

"Uncle Herbert," Mollie exclaimed at dinner, "tell me about 'love versus a rain storm.'"

"Why, your little fraud, what do you know about that?"

"I found a miniature in auntie's escriptor, and she said the lady was your affiancée once, but that her own golden hair entangled her heart to the exclusion of the other lady's image."

"I think you made that suggestion yourself," laughed Mrs. Maynard.

"I believe I did. And it was true, was it not, uncle Herb?"

"It certainly was, Mollie."

"Auntie said that you called it a case of 'love versus a rain-storm,' and that you would tell me about it."

"I will, when we are in the carriage."

In the carriage Mr. Maynard began: "Twelve years ago I was a young man."

"You are now," interrupted Mollie.

"Be silent, Miss, or I shall not tell you the story."

"I am silent," said the irrepressible.

"Twelve years ago I was a young fellow, secretary in the New York house of the firm of which I am now partner. As I had few acquaintances there, and lived in a hotel, I gladly accepted the offer of a fellow clerk, Myron Cowperthwaite, to introduce me to his sisters."

"The Cowperthwaite lived on a quiet street, in a plain house, but their home was a pretty, cheery one; and there were three girls; merry, witty, good-looking, and charming company. But these qualities were all intensified in the eldest sister, handsome Laura Cowperthwaite. She was full and graceful, with brilliant, dancing, night-dark eyes; masses of black, waving, lustrous hair; scarlet lips, that were rather too apt to pout, and a glowing complexion."

"Not a bit like auntie," interposed Mollie, who was always proud of being told she was the image of her lovely, golden-haired aunt Anna.

"Not a bit," said uncle Herbert, his eyes twinkling. "Laura was my ideal of beauty."

"Then you mean before your taste was cultivated," retorted saucy Mollie.

"Be quiet, Miss Impudence, and hear what I have to say concerning the handsome Laura. She immediately determined to make a conquest of me, and I saw it. But she was the only lady acquaintance I had to escort about; I was invited constantly to the house, and—well, I succumbed to her charms. Before many weeks we were engaged. Matters went pretty smoothly through some months, though I did sometimes think Laura required a much larger share of devotion than she was willing to accord; and, once or twice, I caught myself wondering whether she cared to much for me as the clerk, Herbert Maynard, as she did for my being the only son and heir of wealthy old Hugh Maynard."

"In October I had orders from the firm to prepare for a trip to Europe. Laura was engagingly, wondrously affectionate then; and finally the day came upon which I was to sail. It was a cold, fearfully rainy Thursday. I had not taken my final farewell of Laura the night previous, for she was to be on the pier to see me off. It rained so fearfully, I sent a carriage for her, and just after it had gone, there came news that delayed my trip for a month. I started immediately for the pier to meet Laura, and tell what I supposed would be to her glad tidings."

"The carriage brought no Laura, however, but a note at which I was terribly cut and angry. It rained too hard for her to venture out for such a trivial matter. She hoped I would write soon, and then I could say good-by as well as if she had taken the trouble to come and see me off."

"That afternoon Myron said, 'Since you are in New York, instead of on the Atlantic Ocean, I presume we shall see you at the house this evening.' 'I think not,' I answered, and hurried away. Laura would understand my absence, and she could repent a little, I thought. I was angry, and in a mood to battle with the storm, so I walked up Broadway. As I had my umbrella pretty low, to shield myself from the blinding rain, I walked very roughly against a young lady, causing her to drop several parcels. I picked them up, and apologized, and finding her very sweet and pretty, I begged permission to hold her umbrella, or carry her packages. She was condescending, and the walk was so pleasant, despite the storm, that I was awfully sorry when she stopped before a handsome brown-stone mansion."

"You will come in, Mr. Maynard?" she said, using my name to my intense astonishment; and then she laughed. 'I am Anna Culvert, Mr. Maynard; and you would have known before, but that I have been away to school. Do come in; papa and mamma will be so pleased.' I did not need much urging from my employer's pretty daughter."

"Who sits opposite," suggested Mollie, in a low interlude.